FOLLOW THE SUN

ALTON KETCHUM

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The author, after a week of association with cows

FOLLOW THE SUN

by

ALTON KETCHUM

FARRAR & RINEHART
INCORPORATED

On Murray Hill New York

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For
My Mother

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FOLLOW THE SUN

CHAPTER I

Atlantic Rodeo

"Beeing young (and living idelye) in my native Countrie, Sometimes applying my selfe to the reading of Histories, and straunge adventures, wherein I tooke no small delight, I found my minde much addicted to see and travaile into straunge Countries . . ."

Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies (1576)

If you are a cow-wrangler suffering from ennui, a ribbon clerk with a penchant for Conrad, or a college senior with a flat purse and the wanderlust, why not go to Europe as valet to a Canadian steer?

That is, if you have ten dollars, coin of the realm, required by the gentleman in Montreal who gets you the job, and know either intuitively or from Emily Post the correct rejoinder when the bo's'n demands quaintly to know where tha gee de aitch did ya put that shovel, ya deleted idiot?

Life on a cattle-boat, Yo-ho! (Moo!) While it palls eventually on anyone who has not lived all his life down by the gas woiks, it is a pleasant diversion from the orthodox banality of the average ocean voyage, and when you don't have to shave for twelve masculine days, gives some idea of what you would look like as a Mormon elder.

Besides, if your immediate superior is as genial as Old Sam, French Canadian boss of the for'ard port gang,

who had crossed the briny so many times that his best guess as to the number could be only an approximation in hundreds, you will hear scores of delectable opinions on mixed drinks, contrary winds, correct stance for aisle-sweeping, proper form in addressing a refractory steer, ditto with a ditto woman, how to sing "Jolie Alouetta," and how to keep the passengers on their feet when the old tub rolls in order that they will refrain from involuting their numerous stomachs. These facts are not to be found in the largest libraries.

Wiseacres had told me crossing the Atlantic on a cattle-boat was going to make the Black Hole of Calcutta seem like a pink tea. The crews were red-eyed buckos from the world's water-fronts; swine would choke on the fare; we would be lucky if we saw land in three weeks, and the officers were a crude essence half Simon Legree and the rest Captain Kidd. There were dark rumors of a ship that had lost its rudder during a terrible spring storm shortly before, and after thirty-eight days of drifting, had thrown the cattle overboard in mid-ocean.

But one afternoon I had been reading my well-thumbed "Cyrano de Bergerac" on the old college steps in the warm sunshine. All the world had gradually assumed a rosy smile completely obscuring practicality. Vague longings had possessed me.

Somewhere were tall peaks glinting all purple and platinum in perpendicular skies; somewhere the shades of disguised caliphs and grand viziers still haunted stained Oriental byways; somewhere there were twilit deserts and enchanted vales, curious cities and strange

faces. The magical twang of Seville and Kyoto, Bombay and Rangoon rolled around my mind and grasped my tongue. To see red sunsets, swim cool streams and smell the moist richness of newly-turned earth—that was what I wanted! Ten thousand miles seemed but the glimmering of a moonray if at their end were new wonders and brave music and warm hands of friends. There were green oceans to cleave and black tunnels to pierce; blue skies like girls' eyes to soar through and dusty deserts to endure; frosty pinnacles to stand on in spread-legged exultation; flame-roaring volcanoes to defy. There were gilded coffee-cups and surge of quivering air at blasted noonday; there were rain-lashed jungles gorged with green life-plasm under a bloodshot sun. There were ancient castles whose shattered keeps still shouted hoarse battle-cries, and old gardens to wander in very near Eden. Adventure? No—more than squared-away, die-cut adventure—the tang of distance; the aura of strangeness in sight, sound and taste; the wind of on-rushing events; the slip-stream of life

I would get out to find them. I would go wherever they called.

I did not suspect that they would lead to a job as farm-hand on the North Atlantic. Neither did Ernest Thwaites, who volunteered to join the expedition.

Budgets had been spent; our pockets were filled with hope. So we rolled up to Montreal on faith and charity.

Our first sight of the *Colonian* as she lay at the pier was hardly prepossessing. The old hooker was a litter of rope, rusty winches and paint cans from her stern to

her stubby bow. Amidships rose a scaly funnel and just abaft that a one-armed image of Captain John Silver, who hallooed in a basso profundo so like a foghorn that a general whoop went up from the tenderfeet. Item: We shall never again laugh at a bo's'n within the bounds of his peculiar domain.

Captain John now proceeded with a brief and contemptuous address of welcome, in the course of which he intimated that all that was keeping the bloody old scow out of Davy Jones' Locker were the several thousand stratified coats of paint on her hull, all else having long since rusted away—that we should probably all get sick, if he was any judge of lubbers, and that fearful penalties to which the rack was a bed of orchids awaited him who shirked. Whereupon he stalked before us down a wooden ladder into the gloom of the fo'c's'le-head, where we stowed our gear and tested the corn-husk pallets before we were piped on deck again.

Suddenly an excited mob of Frenchmen rushed from the pier-shed and down the runway, waving their arms windmill fashion and howling like wild men. All of us knew something about the technique of yells, having come from the campuses of Yale, Dartmouth, Illinois, Western Reserve and other colleges only a day before, but for sheer beauty none could find a comparison with what filled the air. Once having heard that chorus any cheering section on the continent would have sadly buried its megaphones and taken strychnine.

In a moment, we sensed, the cattle would come charging at us like the Scots Greys at Waterloo! We picked up

Thwaites and the author on the stern of the former's private car. The start.

The author up by the crow's nest of the cattleboat

cudgels, assumed attitudes of defense, and wished our uncles had been matadors.

The din increased. The Frenchmen pounded with their sticks. So did we.

Then for a second the noise shaded off, and at the gangway door appeared the dejected and tragic countenance of a train-sick Saskatchewan steer, despair written in his eyes and anguish in his gait.

I choked and departed aft to join the hay gang. Someone threw a hatchet at me and I found myself shredding a flinty brick of solidified grass that expanded surprisingly into green accordions when I cut the wires. We hauled up bales from the hold. We tore them apart energetically. We filled the stalls with bedding for our little charges.

"*En garde!*" Here they come! The narrow aisles echo the thunderous clumping of hoofs as the stream of broad backs rolls toward us. Even the timid ones are joining now in a mad stampede. Jostling, crowding, bawling in terror and disgust, those behind pile up two deep on those before in a kicking, struggling mass.

"Twist 'em!" yelled Sam. "Twist 'em to turn 'em!"

"What?" we cried hoarsely. "Twist what?"

"Tails! Tails—you blitherin' fools!"

We charged into the mêlée like a forlorn hope from a sally-port, on our lips ringing the immortal words:

"Twist, lads—remember the tails!"

Tails to the right of us, tails to the left of us, bashing us athwart the face, wriggling loose from eager grasping —held on high as guidons and rallying points for the

enemy. Ours not to reason why—ours but to preserve a footing on the heaving backs of the tumbling steers like circus riders—ours but to twist—and twist.

I leaned over to claim a rare black specimen tufted at the end and was jerked swiftly from my stanchion down into the roaring press. Two bulging sides caught and flattened me to a breathless wafer. Hoofs scarred my shins and trod my toes—a desperate bovine loomed just behind, opened his cavernous maw an inch from my ear, and his impassioned shriek almost shattered my ear-drums. A horn caught in my hip pocket and something vital carried away with a sickening rip. Still I clung to the black tail, which finally responded to a neatly-tied figure eight and veered in the right direction. It was almost as bad as the stock exchange on a 10,000,000-share splurge.

The days blurred into a regimen of stew, feeding, shovelling, piling it here and piling it there, pitch and toss, icebergs and learned dissertations by the first mate on correct procedure when torpedoed with a cargo of mules. He resembled Jim Bludsoe of the Prairie Belle, even to checked shirts, black mustaches, a hawk nose and a fondness for tall bottles.

Old Sam, our centurion, rejoiced in eight teeth, by actual count, and possessed a line that took three hours to pass a given point. In his younger days he had ridden, hitched, walked, swum and in emergencies worked his way over seven seas and five continents. For a private in the ranks his invariable title was "Yohnny." Two days out, for a conspicuous deed of gallantry on the field of

"There was something ludicrous in the thought of five hundred cows in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean."

The ELFIEDA, St. John's to Liverpool, which we passed 600 miles from Ireland

Old Sam, best cattleman on the Atlantic

"We spent a month of misdirected enthusiasms . . ."

feeding I became "Billy," which was nothing less than a second-lieutenancy. Sam doted on big words. Eight syllables with one breath and Ernest was brevetted "Educated" for all the world to hear—became a proud wearer of the Croix de Guerre of the cattle-deck—a creature exalted above us run-of-mine punchers.

We bribed the cook with British gold and ate more wholesomely thereafter. Within his peculiar demesne this worthy exercised a sway that was absolute. He was a gigantic black from the Barbadoes, always bare and shiny from the waist up, and when he slouched across the galley, his long, ape-like arms bowed and the red fire-light outlining him purply sinister through clouds of Hadean steam, he was a conjure man for sure. Of him the baker lived in deadly fear. And with good cause; he was a bald, pot-bellied little fellow owning a moustache like a sprinkler system and cheeks that seemed to have ballooned out and suddenly deflated without recovering shape. He lived approximately inside an undershirt five sizes too large for him, and was always kneading mountains of billowy dough in tubs, from the midst of which he peered out pastily, timidly, like a yeast germ doing his little duty down deep in the bread.

It was marvellous how quickly we sloughed into the primitive. At eight in the stuffy bunk room, with rolling seas crashing against the bulkheads outside, the yellow rays of a swinging lantern fell upon a group of roughnecks with stubbly beards, in dirty flannel shirts, playing cards in a reek of blue smoke with a greasy pack. All the profanity of eight campuses was hung for exhibition. One

would hardly have imagined that only a few days before they had led Senior Proms or tacked several letters of the alphabet to their names. Rather it looked and sounded like O'Neill's "Bound East for Cardiff," in which I had played several months before. Whole speeches fitted in admirably. The Dutch boy who was a Dartmouth sophomore was also night watchman, and he it was who, every morning, prepared the coffee, opened the door of our chamber and announced in a high tenor that would have done for a Prince Regent—"Gentlemen, you may arise!"

There was hardly ever a time when, in the act of shuffling a bridge deck, it was not possible to look out the fo'c's'le door and see the large and reproachful brown eyes of a hungry steer gazing through at us. There was something ludicrous in the thought of five hundred cows in the middle of the Atlantic ocean. It was a rural touch almost as anachronistic as the classic elephant on the roof of the First National Bank. It gave the whole ship a Gilbert and Sullivan atmosphere, which is perhaps one reason why the young English instructor from McGill, returning to his native Birmingham, was continually yodelling the Wandering Minstrel song from "The Mikado" as he handed buckets of water down the aisles, swearing softly between stanzas when a thirsty snout overturned a pail and flooded the scuppers. Some of those steers must have been interbred with camels, judging by their alarming capacities. When we were not watering them they bellowed for hay, bales of which we moved end-over-end up and down the aisles before serving—or

for grain, countless sacks of which we pulled from the hold by dint of main strength on a rope sling.

Ten days, and we were rounding Ireland; eleven, we were in St. George's channel—a glassy surface traversed by the flickering beams of the lightships. A sweet smell of new-mown hay wafted to us on the breeze, and at noon on the twelfth day we tied up in the Mersey at Liverpool and climbed down rope ladders into England to unload hay bales for two fast and furious hours.

Then we bade goodby to Old Sam and stood solemnly at parade rest while that noble white steer, Eustace, Duke of Bilgewater, was duly led off. Unlike his rougher brethren, Eustace had never kicked over water pails nor vented his impatience with his horns. Eustace was a gentleman, and undoubtedly made splendid steaks.

For two weeks we wandered across England, living on Bovril and strawberries. We crossed the Channel, explored the old battle-lines in Flanders, and came by devious ways to Paris. It was the very eve of the National Holiday.

CHAPTER II

Vive This and Vive That

"As I came in, on the left hand, was the Tower called the Bastile, well knowne by that name, which was begun to be built in the yeere 1369 by Hugho Ambriet, Provost of Paris; and he being condemned to perpetuall prison for imputed heresie, it came to the Kings hand."

An Itinerary Written by Fynes Moryson, Gent. (1617)

"Al-lons en-fants de la-a-a-a Patrie
Le jour de gloire est arrivé——"

Monsieur Thwaites, whose shining features were gradually going into eclipse behind billowy blobs of lather, ceased singing with tragic suddenness as the razor bit deep. Along the edges of a white crevasse possibly indicating the presence of a mouth wove a thin crimson rivulet. He held the offending instrument on high like an executioner's axe and struck an attitude.

"Symbolism! The Marseillaise—blood—Bastille Day —what could be more perfect?"

As though in answer, there came through our fourth-story window the strains of a violin and a mandolin played in fast rhythm in the street below. Clattering along in time to the music we heard the hoof-beats of the Garde Republicaine, which soon bore grandly down the center of the street, their casques and breast plates gleam-

ing bright heliographic signals up to us. Was not theirs a just pride on the national holiday, as they cantered to the Elysée Palace to act as escort for *M. le Président?* Off behind them ran the disorganized juvenile troubadours.

Up and down the street, shop windows and doors were fast shuttered; across the portals of trade and from the geranium boxes of second-floor dwellers hung long festoons of bunting and scores of fluttering tri-colored flags. In the Place Danton workmen were erecting a wooden band stand. Rue Monsieur-le-Prince and all Paris was *en fête.*

A gala spirit swept up the Seine and ran through the lantern-studded boulevards; radiated from the faces of thousands of parading poilus as they marched beneath the Arch of Triumph; shone from the round red countenance of the President of France in his long-snouted motor, and even hung for an astonishing moment about the ample form of the Sultan of Morocco, followed by a squadron of almost jocund Arab cavalry. Carnival!

Every other street, it seemed, had been roped off and was being used for a dance floor. From all directions wafted the tattered shreds of jazz tunes, rendered by impromptu orchestras, gramophones and whatever else could be induced to syncopate. In every open place from the butte of Montmartre to the Luxembourg swaying crowds pranced shoulder to shoulder on the smooth asphalt. Clouds of confetti and miles of serpentine rose up gaily to obscure the sun and fluttered back to earth again, frustrated. Costumed citizens and citizenesses

floated from dance to dance like colored froth, circling in the most democratic manner with all presenting themselves. Squeal, musicians! Howl, calliopes! Whirl, dancers! *Vive la France!*

Quite abandoned to merriment, we waltzed from the Rue Bonaparte; tangoed to the Grands Boulevards; zigzagged up and down the Seine in little passenger steamers, crammed to the gunwales with good-natured crowds; cheered twenty swimmers splashing down the river in a distance race attended by a fleet of skiffs, and stood helplessly by while a speed-boat burst into flames at the finish of a close race near the Pont Royal.

The harmoniums in the carrousels rotating giddily at every street fair gurgled and shrilled in dramatic tremolos. Lured by them, we ringed clowns and bought ginger bread, watched Punch-and-Judy shows wherein the marionettes performed the most incredible feats; shot at clay targets, purchased useless trinkets, and passed solemnly before the shrunken and shamelessly decolleté cadaver of a lady mummy alleged to have departed this life Anno 1521. From square to square and park to park, in private houses and public cafes, on terraces, esplanades, boulevards and bridges echoed sounds of rollicking revelry. As dusk fell the party became more and more boisterous; rosy lights winked on and floated cheerfully above the rolling uproar in the streets. The steam organs paused for breath and in a moment blared forth again with access of enthusiasm.

Three exhilarated musketeers glimpsed us in the boiling throngs and tore madly in our direction. We had met

them before in London, where they had arrived as members of a college orchestra aboard a large liner. Would we act as judges in a most important matter? We nodded, wondering what question could be of much consequence amid such a racket. We were convoyed to the nearest *brasserie* and, for the sake of judicial dignity, seated on a leather bench. Jerry the Red, who played the banjo, smote the marble table top with might and main and cried loudly for a *garçon*. The other two regarded him with pity and unbelief. Our curiosity grew apace.

In response to rapid orders from his two companions, in five minutes Jerry's table was sparkling with a frieze of tiny glasses containing benedictine, chartreuse, cognac and other green, purple and potent liqueurs. We were now instructed that to the limit of our abilities, so help us, we were to decide by ambulating the candidate after he had consumed it all whether he could hold as much as he said he could, which the prosecution declared would prove too much for even a Missouri mule. In ten minutes more by the clock, with much smacking of lips and many professional grimaces, Jerry had put away the entire lading of the table top. Grasping the marble firmly with both hands, he rose to his feet, face red, eyes glassy, and set an unfaltering course for the door. Here he drew a bead on the next lamp post, took a deep breath and made it. Luckily there were many of them on the block. At each he would pause like Blondin attempting a tight rope over Niagara Falls, then cast off and accomplish the intervening distance in a series of ballet figures. When he had circumnavigated the block we called open court and

awarded him the Croix de Rum with keg and three stars. He grinned at the others and they vanished in the crowds.

From the Rue de Rivoli to the Rue St. Antoine, and the celebrations seem to have reached a focal point just ahead. About a tall monument outlined with electric lights in the center of the square the hubbub is terrific. Colored flares sputter and flame; mimes caper and bands crash into spirited marches.

A street sign—Place de la Bastille! This is the July column—a pillar of dully glinting bronze that soars into dark silhouette against the evening sky. Yonder is the Faubourg St. Antoine, as turbulent as ever—Defarges aplenty remembering the spilled wine on the cobbles that turned before the day was out into more precious crimson, overhung with a pall of smoke stabbed through by the vengeful flashes of the revolutionary cannon. Out of the Faubourg issues a long file of dancers, turning and twisting like a serpent, doubling and redoubling until the line seems inextricably tangled, whereupon the head emerges from the coils and leaps swiftly away, dragging the tail after it. In the air behind them seems to linger the acrid fumes of burnt powder and the faint reverberations of the guillotine that severed the head of a king and crimsoned the pages of history.

And the echo of a song:

"Dansons la carmagnole—vive le son, vive le son,
Dansons la carmagnole—vive le son du canon!"

CHAPTER III

Castanets

"I went in the morneing tow see the Louer the Kings Pallace itt is a vast Sumtius Building of polliched stone the bigest and finest home in Europe . . . all excellently carved and gilt and painted by the best Masters of France most of Romantick storis and fables."

Travels in France and Italy—Sir Francis Englefield, Bart. (1695)

We survived a carefree month of misdirected enthusiasms on a corner of Rue Monsieur-le-Prince. Ernest occupied the lobby and I the box office of an architectural design four flights up that had evidently contemplated a theater and fallen down half way. Madame, who looked like the last of a long line of vivandières, had grossly exaggerated the volume of the *eau chaude* and misrepresented as Sabbath quietness the neighborhood bedlam. Regarding certain small, unfriendly matters that crawled she had kept a most deceptive silence. And Madame herself had the bad habit of re-submitting weekly bills from three to five times, each presentation being an excuse for formal apologies and involved arithmetic. However, as we paid but twenty cents a day, we seldom argued—long.

Just across the street a plaque marked the former residence of Auguste Comte, expounder of Positivism. We wondered how he could have been positive about anything in Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, especially if he had had a land-

lady like ours and a laundry that billed "American with Glasses" and "American without Glasses," and decorated our shirts with colored string. A lodger on the floor above had the whimsical habit of sending down a barrage of wine bottles almost every evening at whatever target presented itself. His greatest delight was to be had in shattering a series of well-placed missiles against the tin kiosk on the corner, terrifying the pedestrian who had sought shelter within it. At length the besieged would gather his courage and run for it, standing out of range to shake his fist and shout unpleasant things about pigs, dogs and camels. Somehow no one ever seemed to think of the *Agents de Police.* It would appear that anything short of murder goes, on the Left Bank.

We bought cheap French movie cameras taking tiny reels and sat one night in the first row at the Casino de Paris, almost under the footlights, merrily clicking off yard after yard. St. Granier danced as a grotesque Suzanne Lenglen, the Dolly Sisters gazed down into the lenses with a slightly startled look, and ladies fetchingly arrayed in several beads paused momentarily to wink and exert their blandishments for us. On the whole, we had good reason to be glad the film was fireproof.

Then one morning I came out of the ticket booth and found Ernest, still in his pajamas, lying in an attitude of deepest meditation. He was reading a letter. He looked up mournfully.

"Some pretty important business at home," he said. "Perhaps I ought to go back and take care of it. Would you care a whole lot?"

"Not at all," I replied graciously. "Anybody who will translate the latest songs into pidgin French, and sing them at all hours of the night the way you do, not only deserves to be deported, but divers other cruel and unusual punishments. Go on, and I hope you're sick all the way."

"Well, if it wasn't so important. . . ."

"She'll wait, don't you think? Toss me that map and at least look graceful. That class of lady doctors across the street would hardly admire you with your legs crossed three feet above your head."

"What do I care about lady doctors? By the way, the Camembert is terribly aged. Is anything worth while passing below? Well, let's see——"

I held the map up to the wall and swept a great circle down through Spain, North Africa, up again through Italy, Switzerland and Germany.

"Tomorrow I start south," I asserted. "Toward Spain, sunny orange groves, tinkling guitars, castanets and such. Later Algeria. Desert dawns, sheykhs, veiled ladies behind barred hareem casements. Naples, Pompeii, Vesuvius, Florence—what am I offered?"

Ernest emitted a dismal sigh and crossed his legs in the other direction. I pursued.

"Rome, with her seven hills thrown in. Venice and canals at a bargain. All the Alps cheap on a rising market. The whole Rhine from stem to gudgeon—take it or leave it!"

"Sold!" shouted Ernest, bouncing out of bed with sudden enthusiasm. "Sold to the gentleman in the pink

pajamas!" And he began to sing "Tea for Two," in horribly metered French, by which token I knew that he was happy.

So we ate duck No. 79,441 at the *Tour d'Argent* (F. 1582) called on the Ambassador and, sped by the maledictions of our last taxi driver, entered the Gare d'Orleans. Immediately two files of helmeted poilus sprang sharply to attention, flags dipped, a fanfare of trumpets burst into high liquid harmony, and the long roll of drums reverberated through the hall. I glanced behind. Looking quite fat and gaspy, the Sultan of Morocco followed in our steps. Previously I had never understood why his pictures are forbidden to circulate in his own country.

We elbowed through a crush of departing travelers, all of whose known relations had assembled to see them off. It was worse than a sailing day. A stout gentleman attired in heavy black kindly plowed our interference, and by dint of following him and reversing the field occasionally we managed to find the train. Already it was crammed to the nines. Every seat was *louée* in advance. Accordingly we perched in the aisle. Ernest began an animated conversation with a little girl in French 5, A Consideration of the More Important Classical Dramatists. Inasmuch as she understood not a word, the pleasantry could hardly have been called successful. If an old gentleman in full dress whiskers who had donned a linen duster and slippers for the arduous trials of a four-hour journey had not persisted in tearing down the aisle to the back platform at each stop to find out whether it was his, we might have had a fairly peaceful time of it.

Three o'clock found us somewhere near Limoges, terribly thirsty and ravenous for anything like food. At a way-station I purchased, on the fly, a couple of monstrous ham sandwiches and a quart of wine. We absorbed them, although the wine was sour. Ten minutes later Ernest walked rapidly aft, where I found him some time later, pale and thoughtful. I laughed loudly and accused him of weakness. He regarded me with pity. Before very long I needed it.

We landed in Toulouse quite certain we should never be the same again; there was so little left of us. We reeled into the first hotel across from the station, and sank into the depths of a feather bed four feet high, while our heads, in splendid unison, spun round—and round—and round.

We sat at the frail wire-legged table of an *estaminet* in Toulouse the next morning, piecing out a continental breakfast with parkerhouse rolls called brioches, flaky croissants and chocolate. I pored over a map. My wandering finger hesitated, stopped. The nail scored deeply under a well-remembered name—Carcassonne! Carcassonne, whose walls and battlemented towers I had scaled full often, lying before a cheerful blaze of a winter's evening, following with sword and buckler a driving onslaught at some bloody angle. Carcassonne! The very name spelled white plumes and tournaments, knightly cavalcades and medieval errantry!

Time rolled back six centuries on the way to Carcassonne. We were clad in leather jerkins, overlain closely

by chain mail. Daggers, buskins, green hose—how could we have been accoutered otherwise?

The white road wound down past a few stone cottages with roses in the dooryard. Around the brow of a hill and Carcassonne with its fifty towers burst upon us. Straight before was the gate, portcullis raised, drawbridge down. A group of small boys played by the edge of the moat. The cool shadow of the outer wall fell over us. Across the bridge, through another and higher wall inside the curtain-defense, and the steep little street wormed away curiously past old houses of a forgotten age, some of them so far out of true that had their neighbors been removed they would have collapsed. Surely their narrow balconies had heard deathless serenades in the moonlight of June evenings, when perhaps Peire Vidal, the troubadour of Carcassonne, had sung in a soft, clear tenor, ballades out of his own heart, to the strains of a light guitar—songs to his lovely Azalaïs des Baux:

"Beauty turns wisdom into folly
When you speak I cannot leave your side——"

He was eloquent with the final a's of his mellow Provençal, was Peire Vidal. But he went crusading with Richard Coeur de Lion, and he lost his fluent tongue at St. Gilles.

Darkness fell. We completed the circuit of the walls, and descended into the crooked little streets of the Cité once more. For a while we poked about through the jigsaw lanes, peering through little windows where the

burghers sat at bread, popping out suddenly into tiny angles and open places where the only illumination was a doubtful yellow glow from a hanging lanthorn. Now and then, framed between low roofs, and crested with stars, the grim shadow of a tower rose at hand, to fade again as we plunged into another cobbled passage. Every post and projection, every turret and every gable seemed to remind of a helmed Roman, a fierce Visigoth chieftain, a turbaned Moor or a resolute Crusader. The night was peopled with ghostly warders and vocal with faint vibrations—the songs of long-gone minstrels.

We reached the gate once more; passed through the arch; a dim radiance shone below the machicolated slits where molten lead and boiling pitch were used to run. Off down the hill into the "new" city, only six hundred years old—through its quiet streets, and over the Pont Vieux. For a moment we stopped there, and took a final glance at the last citadel of medieval chivalry. Shadowed masses of walls and towers lay opaque against the soft depths of a wind-swept sky.

From the iron-grilled balcony of the Gran Hotel del Universo at Barcelona we regarded the world complacently over a beefsteak which had undoubtedly been massacred in the bull ring the previous day. There was a square below—a little place—and as night came and lights flickered on here and there the cries of the vendors ceased. Then the evening promenade began, to the accompaniment of three ruffles of a drum and three flourishes from a bugle in the nearby headquarters of a battalion in

the uniform of His Majesty the King of Spain. Soldiers and their women came and went through the square, laughing and gesticulating. It looked for all the world like the first act of "Carmen."

Lopez, hotel runner and our diminutive attending angel, had once lived in New York but had gone aboard a ship to see a friend off and had been inadvertently carried back to Spain, a circumstance which he bewailed constantly. He suggested that a pugilistic contest in the Park might interest us—were not all the champions Americans? But we scorned the idea. A prize fight in Barcelona—quotha! Rather a gas station in Arcady—a penny arcade on Olympus! Lopez withdrew, mystified.

Nine found us on the Rambla, walking between a double row of tall palms and counting the soldiers in the patent leather tricornes. Ernest cocked his head doubtfully, smiled and grabbed my sleeve. We quickened our pace. For castanets were clicking and clacking. Guitars were strumming. Someone with a Raquel Meller voice was trailing soft notes into clear, rounded vowels of clear sound. There! A senorita with a skin of pale olive was dipping and stamping and tossing her black hair to the pulsing measures of the orchestra. The stage opened out onto the walk and the interior of the café as well. Those at the tables were clapping their hands in time to the music.

The girl leaped into the air and twirled until her skirts were an uneven foam of creamy lace; she smiled saucily at the world in general and repeated the effort in the other direction. A soldier threw his hat into the air. There

were bravos and cries of "Olé! olé!" from the audience. A dark caballero in a costume of russet leather bossed with little gold medallions sprang to the stage with a gay gesture and they stepped a fandango to the thunderous encouragement of the crowd. These gave way to another senorita, not so pretty, who began a song. But she had a weakness for O-O-O-o-o's in a sorrowful diminuendo at the end of each bar. We passed on.

In the next block apparently half the city was engaged in a neighborly street celebration. Stalls were piled high with bright gewgaws, and at fifty tables under shaded lights the crowd was whole-heartedly engaged in having a good time. On a shelf-like platform before a cafe a band of eleven pieces, composed of oboes, flutes and brass instruments, was playing loud enough to be heard in New Zealand. The music was shrill and penetrating, and the theme, if any, was so hidden in rivers of tremulous variations that it was undiscoverable. Perhaps it was neither delicate nor refined, yet in the yelps of the trumpets and clarinets—in the primitive squeals of the oboes was hidden a subtle, melodic frenzy that excited and entnused all within earshot.

There was a pause—and everyone drank. Then the musicians broke into strange harmony full of cantering counter-rhythms, short sixteenths and groaning minor chords, the burden of the piece being borne by one who blew lustily on a small flute in his right hand, while with his left he thumped a small drum attached to his right elbow. Rings formed; everyone was dancing. Fifteen, twenty in a ring. Round and round to the left—reverse—

round and round to the right—dip, do a step, any step—stamp! stamp!—and round again. A girl with a basket of red flowers broke into our ring and pinned them lavishly upon us all with shrieks of laughter.

The tempo of the dance rose. Some dropped out—others took their places. Old men and young, matronly senoras, children, senoritas in profusion. Human circles were rotating all over the square. One geared into another, collided, mingled, and we were forty—whirling, shouting, springing into the air—castanets and tambourines rattling and the dancers singing choruses with astounding volume. Could the far side of the plaza be a black void over the footlights where a great audience watched? Was this Spain? Or would the curtain ring down presently in a rippling crash of applause, while our flower girl took the encores?

I knew now that we had chanced upon a Sardana, the provincial dance of Catalonia, perfectly expressive of the turbulence of the Catalan disposition—of the bomb-plots and week-end insurrections for which Barcelona is noted—the wild abandonment of sound symbolizing the spirit of Catalan unrest—the more formal measures of the dance the staid conservatism of the Dons.

A murmuring unsubstantial sound became audible—a cumulative thunder made up of tiny taps like the heavy drops of a summer rain. The street on the far side where I had fancied an audience was moving out toward us like a gray river overflowing its banks. We looked more closely. Sheep! Thousands of them were pattering over the stones in a solid blanket—a flowing pavement of

woolly backs coming on *en masse*. The dancers scattered —huddled into the café. The sheep spread into the square, a flood torrent of heads bobbing, feet drumming a solid grainy roar. It was ten minutes before the rear guard had vanished. The party was over.

That night I dreamed of bands of sheep in red velvet breeches circling in a furious Sardana, to the music of a mad guitar.

After several days we journeyed slowly across the white heat of northern Spain for Madrid the Modern, where, perhaps affected by the torridity, we rented a suite near the Puerta del Sol and proceeded to live as hidalgos, while our funds lost ground like barometer readings before a typhoon.

Then, Seville—all the languorous charm of Andalusia in a creamy old city of pools, palms and patios, where the most exquisite girls in all Spain promenade in the cool of the evenings wearing mantillas of black lace caught up around high combs of translucent amber and a red rose where it will do the most good. We assumed the courtly manner and sought small picaresque adventures. At our *pension* were two lean, bronzed Englishmen, one a road-maker and the other a soldier, who had pursued their respective occupations in many parts of the world and who never agreed on anything.

"Seville's the nicest of the lot," affirmed the builder one evening over a glass of malaga. "Climate's the best, wine's the mellowest, fags the cheapest and girls the prettiest. After all, what more is there in life?"

"Algiers isn't to be blinked off lightly," observed the soldier of fortune. "At least, your boots are always shined there. Must be a bootblack for every pair in Algeria. Constantinople's not a bad town, either. Had several tidy wars thereabouts. Turin's a nice place. . . ."

"Nice, hell!" interrupted the other. "Turin gave me more trouble over a mile of roadbed than I've ever had anywhere. Turin is blotto! Strange thing, but when a town won't take a decent road—when it sinks and slips and wants to twist every direction but the right one, that town is always a dud."

"Don't be an idiot!" rejoined his friend. "A bad road always leads to an interesting town because it keeps out people like you who think everything needs improvement just on general principles."

"I'm constructive," sniffed the roadbuilder, glowering at the other through the bottom of his glass. "I lay highways for the march of progress."

"And I'll tear up your old highways every chance I get," the soldier laughed. "So there, my short-haired Christian friend, and be damned to you!"

We left them and walked down a nearby lane between balconied walls of ghostly whiteness. Cubist shadows lay on the cobbles like sharp paper-cuttings. It was a night when pulses beat high. Through old bronze gates we glimpsed the spray of little palm-lined fountains. We passed a Carthusian monk in a brown cassock and bare feet; a peasant in knee breeches, a round woollen cap and a scarlet sash, riding a tiny donkey; aristocratic duennas,

armored survivors of the tradition that launched the Armada, chaperoning groups of dark-eyed girls.

From somewhere was borne the throbbing of slowly strummed chords, harmonizing with a light baritone voice. Above I caught a froth of lace, the black cone of a mantilla and laughter like the tinkle of glass bells.

Caramba y caracoles! This was no operatic serenade! As we drifted by neither paid us the slightest attention. We were inspired to high ecstasy. If, at intervals through that evening, "Sweet Adeline" quavered through the Plaza Nueva and echoed along the Calle de las Sierpes, lay it solely to the amazing discovery that

SENORITAS ARE STILL SERENADED IN SEVILLE

CHAPTER IV

Conquistadore

"In this kingdom there are three cities. The grandest, where they crown their Kings, is Granada. . . . This Kingdom is bounded by the Mediterranean and the kingdom of Castille. . . . The device of this King is a red flag with Arabic letters of gold, such as Mahomad their prophet bore."

—Book of Knowledge of the World, by a Spanish Franciscan, 14th Century.

"It was on this identical spot, Senors," said the little custodian with the face of a happy monkey. "Just inside the roped-off space in the center of the room sat Queen Isabella on her throne, and here Cristobal Colon knelt before her, that he might receive from her own hands the gold she had procured from the sale of her jewels. This is the very place, just here." He bent his knees slightly and glanced around with a smile. It was a pleasant thought, even if historically inaccurate. Histories had never mentioned, moreover, that from this room of the Alhambra nine Moorish windows in groups, three to each façade, look out upon Granada and the River Darro, far below; upon the snowy Sierra Nevadas, olive groves, the outlying Palace of the Generalife on its eminence, and as much other picturesque and romantic scenery as Spain can offer at one sweep.

We explored the fortress at leisure, finding at every turn some reminder of the chivalric figures in Irving's

tales—houris and captain-generals, sultans and seneschals, Morisco knights and Spanish cavaliers. Here was the Court of Lions, even now being sketched by a very young artist, surely not more than fifteen, who paused and stood up politely that his work might be admired. Yonder, over a low-lying wall were the Vermilion Towers, an old Moorish garrison wonderfully preserved. Now we were in a small whispering gallery deep under the walls, opening in turn upon one of the most interesting and least visited subterranean chambers of the Alhambra—the baths of the Moorish sultans. The vaulted roof is pierced with star-shaped orifices, through each of which issues a soft light. At the left are pools for the regal ablutions, one for the Sultan and one for his singular or plural consort. Each is piped for hot and cold running water and boasts in addition a line from which issued rare perfumes. No wonder Boabdil the Moor heaved a mighty sigh as he surrendered his throne forever! It is one thing to lose a battle, a birthright, a heritage—it is quite, quite another to lose the most elegant bathroom in the world!

Gibraltar we had seen, as the special guests of a Liverpool tommy who grew visibly homesick as we mentioned docking at his native Birkenhead. Across the straits had loomed the dark bulk of Africa. Lured on, we flipped a coin and set our faces south.

Alicante was a matter of only about two hundred miles, but when we planned on making it in a morning we reckoned without our host—the host in this case being the pokiest accommodation that ever crawled across the Granadine littoral. We changed cars, waited, changed

again, slept, changed and waited. Ernest tried to while away the time by translating songs into Spanish, with what seemed to be very small success. Night found us near Murcia, still a hundred miles from Alicante, still hopeful and still changing. We quartered at a little tavern, drank much thick Spanish chocolate next morning, girded for the struggle, shook hands grimly and set out.

That afternoon at an indeterminate time the Madrid-Zaragoza-Alicante train wheezed around a curve and there was the sparkling blue of the Bay of Alicante before us. The ship for Africa lay at her pier.

At the last instant before the *Canalejas* cast off a young man carrying a pack sauntered down the pier, rolled a cigaret and climbed nonchalantly up the plank. He wore a tough corduroy hiking suit and high-laced boots. He threw his pack to our steerage deck, sat upon it and asked in Spanish for a light. His name was Senor Don Angel Pereira de Padilla, he was of Ciudad Real and he had many papers with bulky seals which seemed to prove it; not to mention documents indicating that he was the son of a noble family, a captain in the Spanish Air Force Reserves, a Boy Scout leader, a journalist of note and the author of several novels. His immediate ambition was to become a moving picture director, once he had Africa off his hands. For, as he remarked that afternoon, easing over slightly on the deck and taking another bite of our watermelon:

"Not only have I tramped over most of Europe, but Australia and South America, as well. *Cáspita!* that is a

life, now! Even at present I propose a walking tour completely around the rim of Africa."

"What?" cried Ernest and I in two separate dialects. "Walk around Africa? Who ever heard of such a thing!"

"Nobody. That's why I'm doing it."

"But what good——"

"Ah, you Americanos! What good! Why, if you must have benefits, think of the book "Africa" which I shall write. There, my friends, will be a landmark in the literary history of Spain that will stand with Cervantes and the Cid!"

We talked until soft night breezes wafted over a shimmery Mediterranean moonpath. All about us snoring emigrants lay in ungainly attitudes of repose. Smoking silently, we three lay back above the ventilators, from which issued the measured throb of the engines, and looked straight at the moon.

The night was too beautiful for sleep and until late we talked with Angel of far lands, using all our French and Spanish words over and over. Next morning a sharp, black cone of rock like a rhinoceros horn loomed ahead out of a gray mist. A rift soon revealed a white town, half domes and minarets and the rest French commercial buildings. Overnight from Europe, but what a change! Turbans and topees told us that we were already in the East. Long files of dirty Arabs were coaling ships in the harbor and there were a number of fishing craft with striped lateen sails. We debarked down a ladder at a crazy angle and climbed to the heights of Oran City.

Angel announced that he was about to purchase a rifle

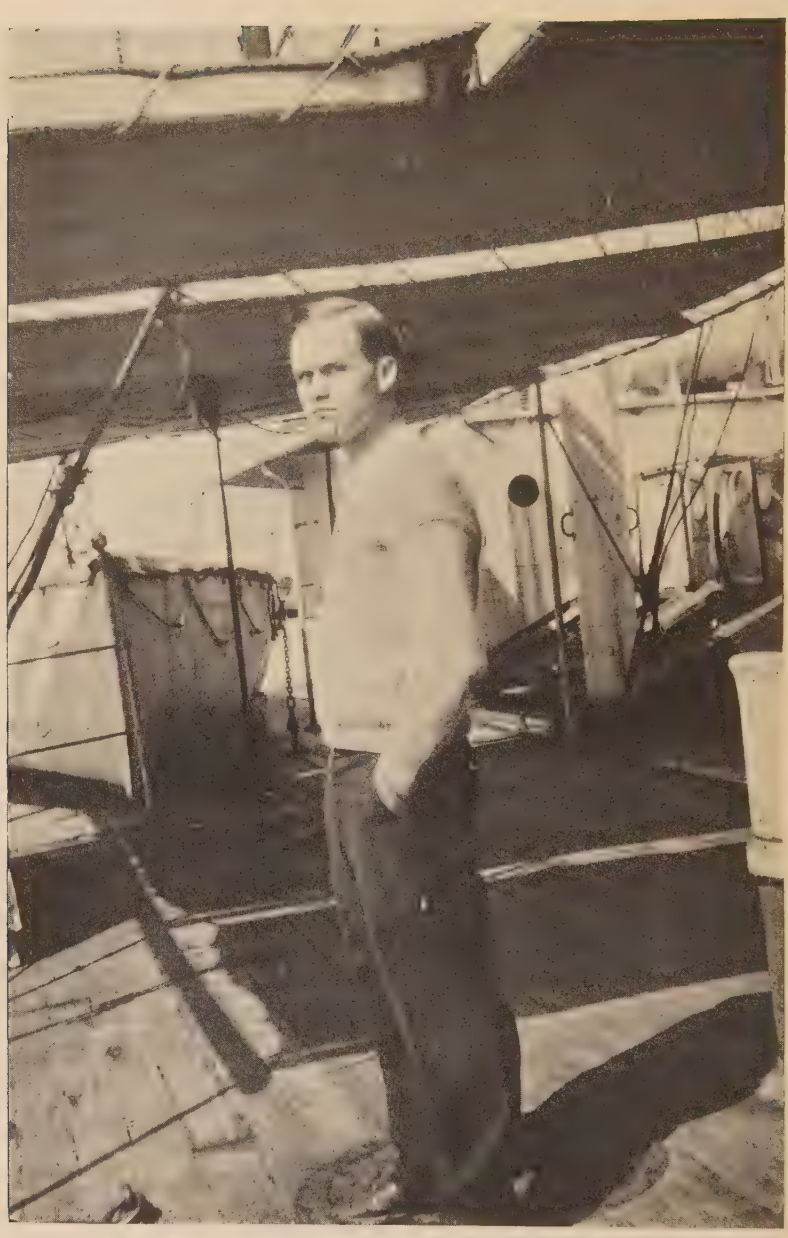
for his *raid* and it was our privilege to assist in its selection if we chose. At the shop of a nearby gunsmith we inspected the bolt actions on elephant guns and magazine rifles with bores large enough to contain a thumb, made our recommendations, and stood by waiting for him to choose. One by one he rejected them. At length he uttered a cry of triumph and grasped a tiny .22-caliber pop-gun apparently designed for forcible feeding of canary birds. Despite our obvious amazement, he insisted upon purchasing it. He then declared that he had decided to ride a bicycle around Africa, just to be different. Would we care to help him make the choice? I declined, feeling sure that he would end up by acquiring a velocipede. Then we bade him farewell and waved as he disappeared. What would happen to this modern conquistadore as he pedalled blithely for the Congo jungles, his toy rifle slung bravely aft! Only from hyenas would he be safe. They would surely laugh themselves to death.

On the way to Algiers that afternoon we found ourselves in the midst of a large and well-tattooed family of Khabyles, a white-skinned, red-haired race living in the Atlas Mountains that parallel the shores of French North Africa. Clothed entirely in white, from oldest to youngest, they sat in solemn rows on the hard seats, regarding us owlishly from under frizzled mops of auburn. Attempts at communication proving ineffectual, we simply sat and smiled across at them all the way to Algiers.

The harbor was twinkling as we climbed to the Boulevard de la Republique that skirts the sea front. The

Madrid: the bull ring

Vesuvius: the inner crater



The author on board the DELFIA in the Mediterranean Sea

instant we set foot on it a squad of bootblacks in red fezzes charged down upon us with savage cries, and I thought of the soldier in Seville.

That night we consulted our concierge on the attractions of Algiers. He was a fountain of information. "And by all means," he advised, "keep out of the Arab quarter after dark." We thanked him with all our French, crossed the threshold and looked at each other. With one accord we headed straight for the *Quartier Arabe.*

It was nine o'clock and a Senegalese Tirailleur band was playing in the thronged *Place.* At the sidewalk cafes around the square sat burnoused Bedouins not long from the Sahara's wastes; natty young officers in horizon blue, Tuaregs with their sweeping hoods, garishly ornamented Jews, devil-may-care Spahis and Khabyles, bronzed and tattoed.

The white Fisherman's Mosque shone dully as we crossed the Square, plunged into a defile and started up rambling stone stairs to the hill-top which the Barbary pirates chose for ease of defense. Roofs met overhead to form long black tunnels. Tall forms muffled in their robes trod noiselessly from step to step, swept through patches of yellow fulgor like wraiths and were lost in the gloom.

We halted where four ambling alleys made an approximate junction. Ernest caught my arm. A strange tinkly music was coming from somewhere, punctuated by the steady throbbing of a drum. Up, around, through a passageway, a dip and a climb again and we were in the street of the Ouled Naïls. The light was a brighter and

more intense yellow. A weird medley of strings, reeds and drums came from doorways hung with striped curtains, and reverberated in the narrow passage.

We stood beneath a low balcony. Half a dozen swarthy damsels clad in all that is customarily worn by performers of the classic *danse du ventre* waltzed out above us, and gazed over curiously, chattering and laughing. Before he could move one of them swooped and grabbed Ernest's helmet. There was a loud shriek of delight. Ernest grinned, retreated three feet to the opposite wall and lit a cigaret. We coaxed, cajoled, threatened. I pretended to vanish in search of a gendarme. They hooted derisively. About as much use searching for a gendarme as for an escalator. So I reappeared, to pause, fascinated.

The girl had the helmet on and was writhing through slow and sinuous contortions to the thudding of the drums, while Ernest stood below in appreciative silence. Her face was streaked with blue and red paint; necklaces of coins jingled from her neck and large gold rings were pendant from her ears. Her feet were bare and thick anklets clinked above their contours. Every part of her revolved in circles before our astonished eyes; she undulated about three orbits simultaneously in snaky waves. She rose in coiled spirals and fell in sinuous corkscrews. Then she ended with one mazy movement in a rumbling of hidden bull-drums. We applauded vigorously. She laughed and curtseyed. Ernest threw her what was left of a pack of Camels. Whereupon Fatima lit one, restored his hat and blew us a very loud kiss.

Several days passed in Algiers. Then the American consul told us of an ancient Numidian city on a high rock near the edge of the great Saharan Atlas Mountains, surrounded by a chasm so deep that only once in its long history had the town been carried by direct assault. The place was a garrison and a caravanserai and its name was Constantine. We set our faces towards it with anticipation.

We stood in the valley of the Rummel a thousand feet below Constantine the next afternoon and saw the sheer precipice dropping away from it on three sides and the narrow isthmus connecting it with the upland to the west. Its capture from the Khabyles by the French soldiers of Marshal Valée in 1837 must eclipse even Wolfe's feat at the Plains of Abraham.

That night I wandered alone through the streets, elbowing through throngs of soldiers in wide red sashes, fezzes and pantaloons; mingling with merchants who greeted each other with the head-and-heart salutation and gossiped as they absently counted their strings of prayer-beads. Then the hum of conversation died away. I was in the Moorish section. The streets were strangely still. Only the soft footfalls of an occasional group of white-swathed figures broke the quiet, which was accentuated by the brilliance of the moon and the mysterious opacity of the shadows. But I heard all at once a queer noise from somewhere behind me. I turned and thought I saw a man crouch and run shiftily for the black shelter of a wall. Rounding a corner, I walked rapidly away. The man was following! He was running in short zig-zags,

taking advantage of cover and stooping low. I had no weapon but a penknife, which I opened and held ready.

The horizon of walls dropped away suddenly and I caught my breath. I was at the edge of the chasm of the Rummel, become in the moonlight a river of intense blackness, stemmed only by the firm shore on which I stood and that other silvered promontory across the way. More than the power of mere geographic separation seemed to lie in that gulf; it was a moat against death itself, bounding the nether world from this. For the moment I forgot my pursuer and stared into the void—the utter silence and the white walls producing an almost hypnotic state, like that of a man who has thought too long on the infinity of space.

A hoarse cry! Startled beyond words, I whirled, tight and rigid. On a low rooftop just behind me, silhouetted against the tinfoil moon stood a large billy goat, gazing down at me with head slightly askew, his beard wagging gently. I laughed in his face out of sheer relief, and then, as I could not beg his pardon in polite Berber, slipped away ere he mistook my form for the shade of a Roman besieger and butted me into the abyss.

CHAPTER V

Carthago Delenda Est

"Tunneis is the Capitall seate of all the East and lower Barbary. . . . And it is the place where old Carthage stood, which city was the Soveraigne Queene of Affrick, and the only envy, and predominant malice of the Romanes, being more than Romes rivall mate, in greatnesse, glory and dominion. . . ."

—Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations of William Lithgow (1632).

In my Ancient History textbook there had been a drawing of the Carthaginian army, with the elephants prominently in the van, routing the Roman legions at the battle of Cannae. They appeared to be doing it with such little effort that the picture of their prowess never ceased to arouse my admiration. Later I had read in the Aeneid of Dido and the intrepid mariner Aeneas. Last of all, the vividness of Flaubert's "Salammbo" had invested the name of Carthage with a special fascination. I knew that Carthage was vain and arrogant and as cruel as the worship of brazen Moloch made her. She forsook her benefactors in their hour of need and pursued selfish ends. Yet all this was overshadowed. Her history became for me the story of Hannibal, that daring young adventurer—that greatest soldier the world has ever known—who for fifteen years inflicted defeat after bitter defeat upon Imperial Rome at her very gates.

Then I reviewed Flaubert's description of the city: how the hill of the Byrsa rose in the center, laden with temples, monuments, obelisks and the horrible images of evil deities that received young children to their fiery embraces; the globes of colored glass and fantastic ornaments that rose above the wide-spread housetops; the war and commercial harbors filled with the fleets of purple sails that made her mistress of the seas; the triple walls that were at once staunch protections and barracks for hundreds of elephants and thousands of horses and troops.

I remembered the armies of the Barbarian mercenaries battering with their rams at the great gates of Khamoun and Tagaste, hurling boulders into the temples with their ballistas and repelling the charges of trumpeting war elephants sheathed in bronze. I recalled creeping with Matho and Spendius to the aqueduct of the beleaguered city, descended to the inner shrine of the goddess Tanith and pilfering the sacret zaïmph, forbidden to the sight of man; I had watched the beautiful Salammbo as she called to Baal and Astarte in the moonlight and swooned to the golden pavement in her emeralds and purple silk; had visioned the squares and towers, palaces and battlements as vividly as though Carthage had still ruled the seas and made the citizens of Rome to tremble for their vaunted sovereignties. Carthage! City of blood and bronze; of selfish schemes and vast daring; of sacrificial horror and resplendent brilliance. She was as real to me as any modern metropolis.

But now the peninsula of Carthage was before us; we were rushing across the Lake of Tunis, where the clouds

of pink flamingoes were wont to fly, in a modern tram that traversed the causeway at forty miles an hour. Suddenly it jolted to a stop, evicted us, and roared off towards Sidi-bu Said, leaving us standing desolately in the blistering sunlight before a small white station with "CARTHAGE" lettered neatly across one end. The landscape undulated away on all sides. Where were the city, the triple wall, the fleet? The answer reverberated through my mind like a booming tocsin—"Delenda—est—Carthago—Delenda—est——" Words of a Roman Babbitt shouted in terror at the end of every address, on whatever subject. "Carthage MUST be destroyed!" Well did Cato sow his seeds of hatred. For never in all history has a world power been more completely obliterated from the earth. Rome gained a temporary ascendancy, opened the gates of limbo and gave her a mighty shove. She vanished —almost. Her records are few and her history is still being pieced together. Her outward semblance is still largely conjecture. Few travellers visit her ruins. All this of a state that missed by inches being ruler of the world!

Slowly we walk towards the sea. I think of Salammbo again and the emptiness is appalling. Here is the marble fountain by the jetty in the ancient harbor, but it receives no longer the propitiatory gold of embarking merchant captains. Traces of the ancient harbors alone remain—the round Cothon, or war harbor, with its wave-tracks made for two hundred stronger keels now supporting the tiny skiff of an Arab fisherman; the rectangular commercial harbor, blue, vacant and pathetic—both greatly

reduced from their former diameters. We pause in ruined basilicas where silks, diamonds and aromatic spices have once been bartered, or weighty judgments handed down; mingle the dust of despoiled temples to Eschmoun and Melkarth with that among the broken pillars of ancient Christian churches; slide into the dungeons of Christian martyrs and tread the earth where they died.

Near the deep fan-like spread of the theater, with its broad marble stage inset with a prompter's box, was the ruined villa of the Roman Proconsul sent to oversee the vanquished territory after the city had been despoiled and her walls literally plowed under to make way for a Roman colony. Close to this a large excavation was being conducted by the government of Tunisia on the site of the palace of a Carthaginian noble which had met its doom in the general sack. The Arab workmen were eating lunch in the shade of a sentinel palm. I stood at the edge of the pit, sensing how a world citizen of 4000 A. D. may feel as he pauses to watch the automatons digging carefully in the ruins of ancient New York (Nih Ierk?)—(Nea Jork?). The working face of the excavation was a composite of fluted marble, mosaic fragments, and bits of colored glass that glittered in the sunlight. What had the residents of this mansion thought as death bore down upon them behind the standards of Rome?

We slipped into the cavity and kicked idly among the shattered capitals. What shiny thing was this among the scraps of blackened stone and twisted metal, almost covered by old cinders? Ernest picked it up—a dainty goblet, glazed with a shiny pot-pourri of bright colors.

As he lifted it the bones of a human hand fell startlingly away from it and scattered on the ground. It was as though the lord of this Carthaginian palace had offered him the goblet across a gulf of almost two thousand years. The centuries had telescoped into an instant of time. "Live to the utmost!" the delicate shell seemed to say. "Today is today—tomorrow I am empty!"

Leaving the blackened victims of Roman wrath to their memories, we prowled through a series of vast underground cisterns formerly used as reservoirs and now become stables for Arab herds. Then—the Byrsa. It is topped by the white chapel of the Pères Blancs, situated where St. Louis the Crusader breathed his last. This had been the center of the city—the city that now lay broken all around us, beneath the heaving heaps of masonry, tile and smashed pottery. Here and there over the section between the Byrsa and the harbors, excavations revealed the blackened stratum of stone fragments and charred bones that marked the day of doom for Carthage. Faint outlines of the forum and the vast hippodrome were yet to be seen. Fields of barley and vineyards grew over the once luxurious suburb of Megara. Across the Gulf of Tunis rose the Two-Horned Mountain, scene of so many fierce conflicts with the Romans and the Vandals.

This Byrsa is not a spot of deep significance in world history comparable with that other eminence in the city by the Tiber. And it has become a melancholy spot—a monument to tragic memories. I remembered how Virgil sings of the arrival at Carthage of Aeneas, the Trojan hero; of Queen Dido's sudden passion for him; of his

abandonment of the Queen at the behest of jealous Venus, leaving her to die on the pyre she lights here as his ships sail away to Italy. She moans as the crackling fire leaps higher. The glow tints the raised sails of the Trojan flotilla, standing to sea, and Aeneas gazes back bitterly at the catastrophe he has wrought, repentant but afraid.

Too, the young Hannibal must have stood here as a little boy and shaken his fist at hated Italy. Below the horizon was Spain, whence he started a few years later to fulfill his life's mission. Across Southern Gaul and over the high Alps with his fearsome African elephants—along the road to Rome and immortality. And later, in that tortured hour of the year 146 B. C., when the plumes of Rome had triumphed at last and but a handful were left, that remnant had fled here to the Temple of Eschmoun and fought to the death. So had this little hill seen the birth and the death of lofty power and overtoppling ambition.

As the *Citta di Trieste* churned slowly out of Tunis harbor we stood at the rail until Carthage sank into the sea with her lost navies and her plundered temples, and the last dark rim of Africa was only a memory.

At Palermo a squad of spangled policemen in impressive bicorne hats dragged aboard a dozen of the most villainous cut-throats in Sicily, scarred, battered and manacled until they could scarcely drag one foot after another. These were stowed away in the steerage all around us, the *carabinieri* posted guards and the ship sailed. One of the guards encamped just below, and when, dis-

turbed by the snorts of one of the poor chained wretches, I awoke at ten-minute intervals in an aroma of grease and garlic, I could see without turning my head the serious little black eye of a 30-30 rifle looking frankly up into mine. Yes, my children, it was a lovely night.

At three o'clock Ernest slung a blanket over his shoulder and went above, muttering that if I wished to stay and be smothered that was my own affair. Dawn found us both at the bow, scanning the coast of Italy. Through occasional rifts in the early mists the dark purple shore line rose like a castle wall. Then, in a twinkling, an increasingly fervent sun drew the curtain. Like a theater-setting before us lay the Bay of Naples, little orange waves in the water of the fore-stage glinting in thin horizontal lines. To starboard loomed the sinister saddle of Vesuvius, trailing a white streamer over the city like a lash held always ready. The flanking volcano, the deep green of the olive groves and the pure whiteness of the city were lovely from the sea, but with every meter by which we drew nearer, their fascination faded. We fled through the streets in the effort to escape whole day nurseries running wild in an atmosphere charged with the keen odor of olive oil. And soon we were in Pompeii, which is as quiet in death as Naples is turbulent in life.

We tarried in the private gardens of noble senators long since dust; stood behind the inlaid marble counters of wine and bake-shops and made imaginary change in drachmas; trod the flagging in the theater and flung lines of burning tragedy out into the highest tiers on the hillside.

From memories of life and gaiety in these narrow Pompeian ways one turns frequently to the grim grayish-purple volcano brooding like a black angel with a flaming sword over the deserted city. A file of chaste pillars will be silhouetted against it; the gaping walls of a villa will disclose its tip, peering in like a giant to inspect the damage he has wrought. I had an impression that the town was held in some wicked spell, as by some Svengali practicing his black arts on another Trilby.

We issued forth from the city and advanced on the monster like knights-errant. On the side facing the Bay of Naples I am told there is a funicular railway. Perhaps there is. But we chose to ride up on horses! Tony, a surly wretch with a malignant cast to his eye and a white scar on his chin, was told off to show us the trail and insisted on coming along. So we mounted and cantered off. An aviator has ten times his height in gliding distance if his motor dies; I grasped the thought and the brute's mane at the same time and looked for soft spots. Just then we struck the jagged black lava-beds from the 1906 flow. I sighed and took a firmer grasp. Tony, that vandal, was acting as rear guard. He urged the nag to bursts of grudging speed with flicks of a quirt. The sensation was almost exhilarating, at first. Few have ever charged a volcano on horseback. I had shaken visions of a new St. George, camera couched, charging up at a terrific speed, rearing to a dramatic halt, and plunging his weapon full into the yawning muzzle of the dragon.

The Light Brigade had nothing on us. The faster Bucephalus flew across the level stretches the more Tony

goaded him to lengthen his stride. And he did! I made loud protests—to no avail! I resigned myself and wrote a mental lead for an obit notice in the Paris *Herald*.

I had the camera in my right hand, and held like grim death with my left to the reins. The more I pulled them the faster the horse ran up the winding path. I stabbed him with my toes, sharpening his ambition to reach the crater in the fastest time ever made. Ernest galloped ahead, laughing cruelly as I flew into the air with each beat of the hoofs and sank crushingly to the leather again just in time to be lifted once more—and farther. He needed choking. I yelled at him as I rose and fell, but in vain. Beneath my disgust swirled and seethed a bitter envy. Ernest thoughtfully palliated this by placing himself directly in front and vaulting on and off his pony as she flew over the trail, quite as a good Culver man should.

Each separate vertebra in my spine disengaged itself from its neighbors north and south and began eccentric dances independently. We were half-way up the side now and footing was less secure, being mostly ash. The hostler belabored my steed and his own. The saddle slid aft until it rested just forward of the tail. The nag halted, closed his eyes and sighed with finality. We dismounted, shouted, coaxed and smote. The old flybait was as immobile as an iron horse on a granite pedestal. I raked him with a handful of gravel which overshot and hit Tony, for which I was rather glad. He swore several hearty oaths in Italian and drew his knife. I reminded him that he was not yet paid. Grumbling and business of pushing the horse upward. Step by step, I dragged

him along to within a few hundred feet of the rim, having in mind the villainous intent to shove him into the barrel of the volcano and wave him a glad goodbye as he disappeared in a cloud of yellow smoke. But he was wary and refused to budge. He shied and bit vaguely at me. I swung a neat hook; he ducked adroitly and I think he grinned. I cursed his ancestors and stamped wearily through the ankle-deep ash to the edge of the crater.

A strong wind whipped our clothing sharply and flung dust into our eyes. At our feet wisps of acrid vapor seeped from fissures in the lava. Across the face of the saffron sun rolled from the ash cone not many yards away billowing clouds of dun-yellow smoke, rising high into the heavens. At irregular intervals there was a noise half way between a grunt and an elephantine cough and from the cone masses of red-hot rocks shot fifty to a hundred feet in the air.

Below and to our right lay the extinct crater from which death had descended on the tiny dwellings of Pompeii far below. Amalfi and Sorrento edged the clear blue of the Tyrrhenian sea miles away; their loveliness lost nothing by distance. Miles and miles of fertile valley dotted with tiny white hamlets swept away into a mysterious horizon.

No one should ever be allowed to ride into Rome on a train. We were handicapped both by our mode of entrance and a definite partisanship for Carthage. St. Peter's the Forum and the Colosseum seemed hostile

ground. Then late one afternoon we chanced by the gray old monastery of the Cappuccini.

Its ponderous doors swing in answer to our knock. We enter like dusty pilgrims from a far land. The chapel is a dim vault, lighted from one end by branching candelabra whose radiance draws soft highlights on the silver crucifix below. Dark masses are painted in where motionless figures kneel in silence upon the cold stones. An old fragrance of incense-breathing centuries is all-pervading. It is refuge from storm, surcease after pain. Sanctuary.

Out of the dusk he materializes like an ancient prophet of the chariot-and-clouds school, just as he should. From his round skullcap to bare sandalled feet he is another Elijah—a later David. His brown cassock is girdled at the waist. Down its front foams a creamy cataract of beard, once a bright and worldly red.

Of course we wish to visit the *cimitero?* Through crouching archways and down black tubes of passages we follow him. Oaken doors ease softly to, fanning dank breaths along the corridors. Bolts as thick as locomotive pistons are drawn aside and run ponderously home again. Finally the passage opens into a small chapel, now stained in pastel shades of brown. A dozen venerable patriarchs in brown robes and long white beards sit along the pews meditating or kneel, lost in their devotions. Even the filtered sunlight which haloes their snowy heads seems purer here.

Another doorway yawns blackly. Worn steps fall away—into the ossuary of the Cappuccini. Queer designs adorn the walls of the first low vault as you see it, and the

shadows cast by the yellow glow of the lamps are weird and uncertain. The successive chambers are much like wine cellars, with low-arched ceilings that hint of cabals and mysterious disappearances. And the designs, you notice, are worked over all of them. They are odd, but strangely attractive. It is something of a shock to find them out. Your bizarre ornamentations are solely and only human bones!

Filigrees of vertebrae tastefully grouped; artistic grilles of true, false and floating ribs; dainty fret-works of finger remnants; neat gridirons of tibiae and fibulae; garnitures of tiny toe bones, arranged in circles, octagons, trapezoids and isoceles triangles. Bones, bones, bones!

Ridiculously you wonder what would happen if they all suddenly decided to assemble themselves again. What a setting for a ghostly *danse macabre!* Midnight. A bell tolls. Instantly all space is filled with flying fragments of skeletons!

The monk was speaking in French.

"The soil covering the floors of these crypts was brought from Jerusalem. In the old days, a brother lay buried in it for ten years after his demise, whereupon his remains were disinterred, and—so to speak——"

"Glorified," volunteered Ernest.

"*Précisément.*"

He indicated a number of cowled figures propped in shadowy corners, whence their leathern masks, more distorted than any Benda ever dreamed of, grinned at us like fiends with too wise mirth. These, being poor sports, had resisted the processes of deterioration in the holy ground.

"Is there any school of decoration to guide the—artists?" I asked.

"The designs are all quite inspirational," he responded with simple dignity.

We wandered through the dolorous crypts one by one. I felt like a character out of Poe. Lines from "Lenore" flew slowly through my mind like heavy-winged bats. The yellow lights in the shinbone lanterns fluttered and guttered dismally. There was a dead stillness. Ernest shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"Just about how many would you say there are?" he inquired of the holy Father.

"Four thousand."

Ernest drew in his breath.

"Can you identify them, each one, bone by bone?"

With a wide gesture the old man swept all names, titles and paltry tags into the ringing silences of infinity.

"They are all—all Cappuccini!"

Splendid! Grandly done!

And yet, that legion of scattered friars—that great battalion of lost identities——

Poor ghosts!

CHAPTER VI

Fascismo Forever!

"Venice is a Garden of Riches and worldly pleasures—the chiefe flowre of common-weales . . . in the bosome of Neptune and divided from the world with a part of his maine body, which environeth the Iland."

—Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations of William Lithgow (1632).

We had sworn a solemn oath, by all the gastronomic gods, that in Italy we would eat at least one dish of macaroni in each and every city, served with the peculiar embellishments of local custom and tradition. I revolted in Rome, flinched in Florence, and in Venice gave up the struggle over a large bowl of library paste. To sharpen the edge of my misery Ernest sat gaily opposite on each occasion, rested his cheek on the table and slid dexterously up long ropes of the awful stuff held at arm's length. His mileage would have stretched to Mars. It was worse after he acquired the incidental score without which no such exhibition is complete.

We spent several days in wandering through the Pitti and Ufizzi galleries of Florence, past Rubens masterpieces as large as football gridirons and a puzzling succession of scenes depicting an unsuspecting damsel named Susanna being spied upon by several unprincipled old men while in the act of taking a bath. Then we left a reckless number of precious lire in cameo shops on the Ponte

Vecchio and rolled across to Venice. The Bride of the Adriatic was not at home to us. To begin with, the day was one of *fiesta*, the arched bridges over the canals were jammed, and every gondola was filled to capacity. We walked and we walked. With each step the fact was impressed upon us that Venice had streets! We must have tried every one. At last, in the very shadow of the famous old Rialto bridging the Grand Canal we found a grimy little *albergo*, which proved tenable, despite the swarms of mosquitoes that droned above in battle formations and threatened to carry us bodily out the window.

That evening we sat in pajamaed ease, writing. Half-past ten struck from a nearby church tower. The crowd passing to and from the Rialto was thinning out.

Then a blare of martial music burst through the open window. The clash of cymbals and the steady throb of a big bass drum sent little quivers down my spine. Bam! Bam! Bam-Bam-Bam! A throaty chorus of male voices was singing and cheering. Just as we thrust our heads out to discover the cause, the van of the parade appeared two canals down.

We grabbed trousers and shoes as one man. Downstairs we joined in a terrific jam of shouting and gesticulating Italians. Most of them were in black shirts, and all without exception wore red, white and green Fascisti badges. The band roared, tootled and clanged by; followed by several flags on gold standards and a man holding a symbolic silver chalice on high.

Torchlights flared green and red, bobbing along merrily on the narrow river of heads. Tradesmen came

to the doors of what shops were still open and cheered. Everybody was shouting vivas for things in general and Mussolini in particular, and a broad little man with bushy eyebrows, a wide mouth and a voice like a bull gorilla's exploded continuously into something that sounded like "Hurryup! Hurryup! Hurryup!"

We grew enthusiastic. We shouted with the rest. "Viva, Mussolini! Viva! Hurryup! Hurryup! Hurryup!"

The parade wound its shouting way into a little piazzetta and we all sang several rousing Fascist hymns *allegretto con moto.*

"Viva Il Duce! Evivva l'Italia!" yelled the crowd.

"Hurryup!" shouted the little man, Ernest and I. "Hurryup! Hurryup! Hurryup!"

The tumult increased as a scowling person with a big medallion of crinkly red, white and green on his black chest climbed to the shoulder of a statue in the center of the place and began to exhort in a loud voice. Every time he viewed with alarm or paused for a reply we led the cheers.

He finished amid thunderous applause, and the crowd broke into "Giovannezza," the Fascist marching song. Then the band banged off towards San Marco, the marchers dispersed, and Ernest and I rolled back down the alley, warbling paens of highest laud to *Fascismo*, flourishing respectively red and green torches that flared and sputtered, and shouting a friendly "Hurryup!" at every night-capped head that stared down on two idiots in pajama-coats holding a street parade at midnight in Venice.

We strayed across into Switzerland and came one afternoon by third class to Zermatt, in the shadow of the Matterhorn. Zermatt is the artist's paradise. Nowhere else could grass be so individually green; snowy peaks so dazzlingly white; peaked châlets such a definitely dark and unequivocal stain of brown. Even the spots on the cows are a brighter tan in Zermatt and, owing to the fact that many old Swiss ladies wash them as they do their own children, from tail tip to nose tip, their esthetic values are unparalleled anywhere in the whole bovine cosmos.

The clear Alpine air beckons on to deeds of danger and derring-do; I looked about for something on which to practice. All the mountains had been climbed again and again. So far as I could see, there was nothing to write home about in being lugged up the Matterhorn or Monte Rosa by several stalwart guides who knew every crook and turn as well as they did the streets of Zermatt, and were a little bored with hauling tourists up into Alpine Club memberships anyway. So I chose a gentle climb up the Gornergrat and went alone, Ernest being burdened with a cold and preferring the funicular. At break of day I passed through the village and to starboard of a herd of shining cows. The path inclined upward, winding through groves of evergreens that parted now and then on the most enchanting prospects of the brawling Visp, the village, the Matterhorn and the cows that it is possible to imagine. Up the Riffelalp and Riffelberg I trudged and thence toward the summit of the Gornergrat. Ernest was perched behind a stone wall on a twelve-inch ledge at the last turn, with his camera ready to record

the finish for posterity. But he coughed, his foot slipped, he grasped wildly at nothing and I leaped out of character to drag him over the stone wall to safety. Below was something to which he had paid not the slightest attention—a sheer drop of two thousand feet to a glacier!

Drunk on scenery, we arrived in Geneva on that memorable day when Germany was admitted into the League of Nations. It was twelve years to the day after the tide had been turned at the Marne that this last barrier was removed to bring into full effect the Locarno Treaty, whereby Germany and France promise never to go to war again. In the Salle de la Réformation Herr Stresemann for Germany and Premier Briand for France clasped hands and pledged before the representatives of fifty other nations that they would earnestly endeavor to bring about an era of peace and good-will. Briand began his classic speech of welcome. His sonorous periods reverberated throughout the Chamber.

"Gentlemen, today means peace. Germany and France are here to say that it is finished. The series of bloody wars with which all the pages of our history are stained—they are finished. No more wars between us. No more brutal efforts to settle our differences. . . . What ravages have been made in history by the delusive picture of national success! . . . Both of us have shown that we can be brave in battles. Let us now seek success in other fields. . . . Henceforth it is the judge who will decide!"

The concierge of the Chamber was friendly; after the session we mounted the dais, sat in the President's chair, descended to the spot where Briand had stood shortly

before and looked over the curving rows of empty desks. There was a brass medallion at the end of each row—Canada, Costa Rica, South Africa, Italy, Norway, England. . . . I glanced down at the reading desk. On it were a sheaf of notes for the Briand speech. I riffled through them; already they were history. With the permission of the concierge, I tucked them carefully into an inside pocket.

Late that afternoon as the barely seen crest of Mont Blanc was fading from view and the sailboats flecked a Lake Leman becoming more and more intensely blue, we left the massive building of the League Secretariat with its half-thousand busy offices and stood silently on the Quai for a moment before starting back to the city. For inset in the wall along the drive was a bronze plaque, hung with wreaths of flowers:

To the Memory of
WOODROW WILSON
President of the United States
FOUNDER OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS
From the City of Geneva

From Geneva we dallied back through Montreux—past Chillon and the soaring Dents du Midi, then across to Interlaken and Lucerne, city of the Lion and the Lake. We ate *pâté de foie gras* in Strasbourg until every goose in Alsace yearned with all his liver for us to depart, and we watched the three-ring circus when the ancient clock in the Cathedral struck, twelve mechanical apostles paraded

beneath the dial, a rooster crowed, and Judas acted out the betrayal. I stalked an old lady with my camera because she wore a ribbon headdress a yard wide, while two curious butcher boys who had followed us with their cart upset its cargo of sausage and trailed the links for half a block. This reminded us that we were very near to Germany.

As the train stopped at Heidelberg we leaned out and cocked our ears eagerly for Mr. Sigmund Romberg's drinking song, lustily chorused by carefree students in red sashes, monkey caps and high patent leather boots. They would be grouped artistically in pyramids and singing to the accompaniment of much table-thumping and swinging of steins. Pretty barmaids named Kathie would flitter in and out, carrying trays that foamed like the rolling ocean; ever and anon some jolly Saxon Corps blade would leap to the table and propose a salamander to all pretty girls; this would be drunk standing in a jiffy, and the entire population would immediately burst into a serenade, fabricated from sentimental tag-ends of standard Shubert successes.

Alas! For Fancy and our trust in Mr. Romberg. As we issued into the town and around a corner of Hauptstrasse, along the two sides of which Heidelberg has its being, we looked down a street empty except for a huge Teuton policeman in a shiny spiked helmet with a gilt crest. He directed us, yawned, looked up and down without enthusiasm and yawned again. Then he moved off solidly, scratching his left elbow, and disappeared. No melodic chords were struck; no malty voices were raised;

no flaxen-haired maidens tripped across the stage. Heidelberg was a snare and a delusion. I fell asleep in a little room overlooking the River Neckar, feeling hurt and disappointed.

But next morning a fresh, warm breeze had blown away all vestiges of this, and as we climbed to the ruined red castle and from that medieval pile surveyed the town, Mr. Romberg's stock rose several points. We were so engaged on the broad terrace of the castle when a friendly student took us in hand. One could tell that he was from the University because both cheeks were scarred with the honorable white gashes of saber wounds, as necessary to evidence a liberal education here as a diploma. He pointed out the scattered buildings of the University one by one. These included the student prison and the squat little duelling house, still extremely popular, as attested the numbers of bandaged faces that passed us. Our friend explained that the duellists are fairly well protected about the body, and endeavor to receive the wound—the sacred scar—on the cheek. A small cut must be nourished and coaxed in order that it may develop into a truly virile disfigurement. A mere scratch is as heart-rending as missing the goal after touchdown that would have won the game. Athletics, in the American or English sense, do not exist at Heidelberg. Mensur, the gentle art of the duelling foil, takes the place of the pigskin and cricket bat.

Our guide's moving finger indicated several student cafes, honored with the names of beauteous Gretchens and Hildas of other days, and stopped on a latticed garden

overlooking the river from the other side and almost completely roofed by a luxuriant growth of grapevines.

"And that," he said, "is the garden of the prince."

I stopped stock-still and shut both eyes tightly.

"What prince?"

"Haven't you heard? The prince who was a student here years ago, and fell in love with one of the barmaids."

All the curves and corners of the world were cordial and sympathetic. The sharply gabled huddles of old houses were so friendly I wanted to caress them, shout gleefully and roll on the ground. Dragging a protesting Ernest, I described a series of ecstatic parabolas across the ancient bridge with the formidable stone towers, almost routed an orderly procession of school children, and came shortly to the garden. It varied little from the original stage setting. Here was the arbor, the river purling along in the middle distance, and beyond to the left, the castle-crowned steep frowning down over the town. Here was the door of the inn through which Kathie vanishes—here was the very table at which the prince soliloquizes in the first act!

We sat us down at that same table to huge flagons served by a very blonde waitress looking more than a trace like the heroine of the operetta. Filtering through the leafy roof above in shining stripes, the sunlight enhaloed Ernest until he looked almost saintly, the spell being shattered only when the stein obscured him. On a simultaneous impulse, and much to the surprise of two old gentlemen sipping lager on our right, we seized the flagons and swung them as we sang Mr. Romberg's

famous Drinking Song through to the last stanza and measure. Probably that was the first time it had ever been sung in its native and special setting, for Heidelberg knows not "The Student Prince."

From the pier at Mainz next morning the Rhine steamer *Kaiser Wilhelm II* sailed, and the decorous spectacle of crumbling castles and terraced vineyards unrolled past the Lorelei and Bingen's Mouse Tower and frowning fortresses still flying the tricolor of France. In Cologne we divided our last few marks and headed for Amsterdam. The land suddenly became flat and amazingly green. A girl in wooden shoes carrying two pails of milk on a yoke waved at us; windmills sprang up in every direction and thousands of cabbages filed away from the canals like round Dutch soldiers.

We crossed the Zuider Zee in a slow fishing boat with a red sail, see-sawed through Zeedam, Monnikendam, Rotterdam and other profane towns, and came at last to the Hook of Holland, where there happened to be a Channel boat all ready to cast off for Britain. Because we had not the price of a bunk, we slept above in a corner of the deckhouse with our heads on each other's shoulders. Slept is, however, a euphemism. Victims of *mal de mer* made the night a succession of twenty-yard dashes and stifled groans, and it is little wonder that an immigration official at Harwich next morning scanned us from head to foot with a cold and fishy eye and asked for visible proof that we would not contribute to pauperizing the realm. A rapid search produced combined assets, in stray centimes, pfennigs, centesimi and pence, of exactly four

dollars and eighty-seven cents. The official leafed over our passports and inferred that England had no further need of us. We were desperate. Assailing him on two fronts, we argued and coaxed until, in order to get rid of us, he stamped our passports "Admitted, on Condition of Direct Transit to U. S. A." We snatched the precious documents and ran before he could change his mind.

Once on the boat train, Ernest leaned back and sighed.

"Well, it's almost over. Tomorrow we'll be back on the dear, dirty old *Colonian*, bless her scuppers."

I considered with gentle touch my half of the four dollars and eighty-seven cents. It said, "Go home!" But I wasn't ready. I had come this far—why not continue? Several articles I had written for a newspaper syndicate had been accepted; perhaps I could write my way. The thought was father to the deed. That night when the Liverpool Express pulled out of Euston Station, Ernest went alone. We had been together every day for three months. As I walked down Tottenham Court Road into New Oxford Street, London seemed very big and very empty.

CHAPTER VII

King Charles and I . . .

"I had frequent opportunities of being present during the proceedings of the House of Commons. The first time I saw this assembly, they reminded me of two flocks of Indian paroquets, sitting upon opposite mango trees, scolding at each other."

—Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan (1799).

Quite the first things I saw were a pair of feet. Which may seem odd, there being so many other and more important things to notice in the House of Commons, particularly at a session during a grave national crisis. Only a pair of feet. Yet one of them, set down firmly, dispatches regiments into tropic jungles, stabs obedience into warlike Bedawi in Trans-Jordania, hurries cruiser fleets half around the world, and causes the front pages of countless journals to blossom black headlines.

The Prime Minister sat on the end of his spine in a most unhealthful position. He snuggled his chin down between the wings of his collar, his expression that of a particularly bored stone Pharaoh. His right arm was propped on the bench and the left lay loosely in his lap. His feet formed a wide, black V on the table between Mr. Winston Churchill and the great golden-crowned mace of authority which reposes exactly in the middle.

I was struck by the extreme informality of the House

procedure. Imagine the President of the United States standing in the well of the House of Representatives and answering sarcastic questions hurled at him by the member from Baraboo (Wisc.), or trying to make a speech explaining the policy of the government while several gentlemen in the left foreground persist in coldly impersonal heckling and the frequent use of short barbed epithets. Imagine the President casting aside the mantle of Official Spokesman, leaping into a taxi under the porte-cochère of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and rushing madly to Capitol Hill, framing on the way a soothing word poultice to save the tottering government. Yet even as I write the stretch from No. 10 Downing Street to Parliament Square has witnessed another headlong dash, on just such an errand, accomplished only in the proverbial nick.

At any rate, here was the Prime Minister, seeming like a rather more assertive Daniel in the Lion's Den as he rose and labored through an involved explanation of how it all began, with the double-shotted discharges of the truculent Clyde delegation cracking and sparkling around his head. Adamant, he proceeds: "——many agreements have already been made in fact in the coal pits and are working in parts of the country where hours are concerned."

A tall, red-faced man in the Labor benches rises with extraordinary speed, ejaculates "Shame!" in a bass viol note, and sits down.

"——Except for a few wealthy people here and there, the losses of the trade have been very heavy."

(Labor cries of "Rot!" and "Nonsense!")

"——We have been, and we are, passing through an extraordinarily difficult time—a time that is straining the resources of our country."

(Labor cries of "Hear, Hear!" and "You are responsible!")

The Prime Minister presses onward manfully through the drumfire of comment, heard by perhaps half of those in the chamber, and apparently quite undeterred by the snipers of the Opposition. Finally he pauses, looks about, slides down the chute of his peroration into a pool of ministerial applause that almost drowns out the enemy. He seats himself unconcernedly and again posts his feet on the table like vedettes between the Treasury bench and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Opposition, who now arises.

Mr. MacDonald hopes, in slow, even tones, that the whole thing will be settled by talking rather than by starvation, although conversation does not seem to have accomplished much so far. "The government," he says, "has never played a straight hand." (Ministerial cries of "Oh!") "The Prime Minister has made the proposal that the miners should give up their national agreement. There is no use beating about the bush—it was a proposal that they should surrender!" (Cries of "Indeed!" "Right!" and "Question!") ". . . the whole people are becoming more and more involved in the suffering caused by the dispute. If the miners are beaten in this struggle, we shall witness their slow return to the pits, shepherded by despair and starvation!" (Wild Labor cheers as he

sits down barely stir the deep folds of Conservative silence.)

Now Mr. Churchill is speaking. His the polished phrase and even tone, as he adduces facts from long columns of coal mine figures marching four abreast, timed to the disarming cadences of his pleasant lisp. As he leans upon a stack of evidence and permits himself a few mild gestures, he looks like a wise, pink-cheeked cherub. He addresses himself especially to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Radical Left, like a tired and patient parent who has forgiven much. As he apposes his fingertips curate fashion one would never dream that once he had a price on his head. Of course that was long ago, during the days of the Boer War and President Kruger, who thought the world was flat. Winston, as he is called here, was a war correspondent then, and an extremely good one, or there would have been no reward.

The Speaker shifts his position slightly and recognizes one sitting directly below me—the little Welsh lawyer—the wartime Prime Minister—the compromiser *par excellence*—David Lloyd George. Visitors lean forward eagerly and the Chamber is all attention. Here is a Personality. Smoothing ruffled pride; throwing down straw men here and erecting them there; tickling Labor and patting the Government—he throws his dart and immediately heals the wound.

One's interest goes to his frosty aureole; to his black pince-nez; to a reflection upon his resemblance, beginning with that flowing mane, to the Landseer lions around the Nelson column on Trafalgar Square; to the long

sonorousness of his inflections. He ends on a high note, with a quick upward shake of his head. Brisk patter of applause.

It was comfortable here in the little gallery. Rubicund gentleman ushers with big eyes were gazing solemnly about to insure the perfect decorum of the visitors. Against their terrific dignity glittered brazen coats-of-arms, featuring the lion and the unicorn, and *honi soit qui mal y pense* in a grand triumphal arch from lapel to shining lapel.

Now the smaller persons were saying their respective says, like a string of squibs after the sky-rockets. Attention wandered to the warm yellow light suffusing down through the rectangles of frosted glass in the beamed ceiling—to the ornately carved woodwork in rich shadings of dark brown; to the sudden glint of Mr. Austen Chamberlain's monocle as he cocks his head sharply at a verbal torpedo from the Labor benches; to Mr. William Joynson-Hicks, Home Secretary, hurrying in and out with portfolios and sheaves of notes; to the two sons of Emir Feisal of Iraq, who have been gazing in wonderment from the distinguished strangers' gallery; to the newspapermen at the other end, scribbling away where Charles Dickens used to sit through the long debates, bored stiff; to Mr. Lloyd George, who slips out briefly for a sandwich and tea; to our own Lady Astor, epigrammatist from Virginia, who seems a little restless; and—to Mr. Baldwin's feet again. Which completes the circuit.

Adjournment.

Corridors full of chatting members, long murals and

intricate floor mosaics. Westminster Hall is at the end of an aisle of marble busts—a beamed cave—dark, now and quite silent. Reinforced with the ribs of old warships, it was once the shelter of kings at wassail and judges in long deliberation. I descended gradually into its gloomy vastness by a bank of worn steps. A brass plate half-way down marks the spot where Charles I received his sentence at the hands of his judges. All steps are potentially dramatic. These are fairly saturated in court intrigues, the divine right of kings, powder smoke and tragic resignation.

I fold my arms, stand squarely where Charles Stuart left almost his last imprint on history, and gaze scornfully at the row of ghostly regicides. The air is still full of faint voices, all crying, "Traitor! traitor!" and the angry laughter of the King as he demands to know by what authority he is tried. The hubbub rises on a wave of nervous excitement—almost of fright. A few faint hearts leave the hall. Somewhere a feeble voice cries "God save the King!" The Chief Justice rises like a black raven.

"——for all of which treasons and crimes this court doth adjudge that he, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body!" The fatal words are lost in the commotion . . . and now, in a twinkling, the swimming sea of faces—all the long sweep of Whitehall—the hastily erected scaffold—the black mask—the last cryptic word,

"Remember!"—a shrieking silence—the broadaxe, glinting as it rises—

"Bammm!"

I slipped on the plate and almost fell the length of the steps. My head—it was still in place, but I felt beads of clammy perspiration. The bobby slammed another door. I hardly heard him as he said "Closing time, sir." My thoughts were all with Charles Stuart, and so were my deepest sympathies.

After three weeks of London I awoke one morning to an intense desire for new scenes, immediately inspired by a wax gentleman in white drill reclining in the window of a colonial outfitter's in Fleet Street. And so, fortified with a draft repaid by Ernest before his departure, I set out once more via Newhaven—Dieppe for Paris, and that evening stood again in familiar Rue Monsieur-le-Prince. The next afternoon I dropped in at Brentano's with my movie camera, which had refused to function.

The photographer wagged his head doubtfully.

"Something you have done to this camera. The motor —it does not click well. It has perhaps been dropped?"

Dropped! It had been shaken on Spanish railroads, pried apart and detained by inquisitive customs officials, drenched by a sudden storm and the ruin completed in our onslaught upon Vesuvius. However, after a careful examination, it appeared that the damage was not as extensive as I had feared. Tomorrow it would be as good as new. I had half hoped it would take a month; the charm of Paris had by no means faded. That curious

young French artist in the norfolk jacket and short peg-top trousers, for instance, engaged in turning over a pile of etchings on the counter—where else in the world would his like be found? Somehow he reminded me of a St. Bernard dog—the same shaggy mane, rugged features, and resigned expression. About his eyes hovered an interesting sadness, and his bearing was that of one who has endured a thousand years of living by the method of trial and error. Suddenly he lifted his head.

"Like to see your pictures. Been over here long?"

I told him. Frenchman!

"Going back home?"

"Eventually. Just now I'm bound for India."

"Say! I'd like to go along!"

"Well, why not?"

"Because I've already been over here six months longer than I was supposed to. I struck Antwerp a year ago all set to study tapestries, but I met a pretty Belgian girl there and spent all my time getting better acquainted. You know how that goes."

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, the old man thought there was something wrong because I never mentioned tapestries in my letters. So I finally moved over to Paris and Lyons and I've been shuttling back and forth ever since. It's a great life. I don't want to go home for sour apples, but I've got to. Shall we move over and sit on the boulevard a while?"

We left the shop and strolled towards the Opera. I, too, felt sentimental over the prospect of departure. After all, Paris and youth are synonymous. I would be leaving

something precious behind—some part of myself which no later visit could ever hope to re-create.

"Think of it," pursued Henry. "I'll go home and settle down and be respectable, with a bank account and a Buick and a whopping big family—I can see it coming. When I come back again I'll be bald and near-sighted and the kids will drag me through the museums, hating it all and panting. Oh, well, let's forget it!"

We sat at a table of the Café de la Paix, sipped our benedictines and watched the motley world of before-dinner roll past. Insistent taxi horns blared their three brassy notes and tuned up in shrill chorus above the bass rumbles of the omnibuses. My new friend regarded the Arab rug vendors sorrowfully.

"For the first time in a year I'm really inhibited. That means I'm half-way home already, whether I like it or not. Paris is in my blood, somehow. I know a man who spent six months once in Hawaii and was homesick for it all the rest of his life. I think I'm going to be that way about Paris. It's got me: the way they name their streets after revolutions and little hearts; and these tables on the sidewalks where you can sit awhile in the sunshine and enjoy yourself; and the little weazened old ladies in the news kiosks selling paper-backed novels and eight-page papers; and the hell-bent way these taxis tear in and out with their horns shrieking like steamboat sirens, and the public lovemaking. Yes, and the Montparnassians, too. By the way, have you read this?"

He held up a dog-eared copy of James Joyce's "Ulysses." I shook my head.

"It's great. Thought it was trash the first time I read it, but the thing grew on me. You must read it sometime, really. They say it's contraband in the States, because it says all the words. Joyce is supposed to graph out all his stuff on a drawing table with colored crayons, and rewrite it as many as twenty times. Think of it! I've been told he spent over a thousand hours on one chapter. Still, it's pretty hard going in places and I don't understand everything yet. That's why they call it the Bible of Montparnasse, I guess. Garçon, deux encore!"

A few leaves dropped from the trees along the Boulevard des Capucines and drifted to the pavement in slow, fluttery circles. Henry regarded them moodily as the breeze freshened, and they scurried along beneath the feet of passersby with a noise of tearing silk. He brightened.

"What are you doing this evening?"

"Feeling gently sad about what I'm leaving."

"What do you say we tell Paris goodbye—not offhand, but as if we meant it? Let's say goodbye so hard and so long that Paris won't forget us when we, or at least, when I, come back thirty years from now in chin-whiskers."

"I say—remarkable!"

"Let's go!"

Across the city we sped, while Henry read several breath-catching passages from "Ulysses;" the taxi screeched to a stop at a corner of the Boulevard Raspail. Henry found two friends at tables of the *Rotonde*, who called two others, with the result that with us a Russian painter, his wife, a red-haired English student of archi-

tecture and an American free verse poetess with a swan-like neck sat down to a dinner of so many courses that by the time the cheese was brought in the hors-d'oeuvres seemed part of the Stone Age. Amid the popping of corks, even the Englishman became volatile, and the conversation of the other three ran like a mad torrent between cliffs. Disengaging myself gently but firmly from a discussion with the poetess, I leaned back and listened, with a warm, comfortable feeling that I had known these five people for at least twenty years.

Never, even in high school debating societies, had I ever heard the subject changed as often and to as little purpose. Perhaps it was a purple haze out of the pictures from the exotic school of Picasso and Matisse, whose post-impressionist followers adorn the walls constantly with their latest and most inspired creations. Or, again, it may have been the champagne. At any rate, they talked of polygamy, cheese and Sisley Huddleston; reparations, Lenin, the Malthusian theory, Alice Delysia, cathedrals and channel swimmers; Isadora Duncan, Ruskin and Chicago—shifting conversational gears with amazing ease and speed. The Russian, with his prominent brow-ridges, sparkling black eyes and positive opinions, was a pedantic egotist—a large black star around which revolved that little planet, his wife, to whom he was doubtless the whole solar system. He took his chief delight in the number and obscurity of his allusions, which he plucked recklessly from all lands and ages, barely one bound ahead of the poetess, who appeared more vexed each time she failed to follow his reference.

She spurred him on to a contest of personalities, which sped faster and faster along a zig-zag path until I confidently expected to see the top of the Russian's head blow off with a loud report, followed by a tangled mainspring and charred fragments of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. But it was not to be. They had covered the conscious and subconscious, imperialism, ethics, metaphysics and aesthetics, and were thundering along over the prostrate form of music when the Russian out-did himself in an especially violent gesture and fouled a finger in his wife's right eye. After an instant of pained surprise she began to cry softly, the poetess soothing her and the Englishman looking self-conscious, while everyone else in the place glanced over knowingly and smiled. Henry and I took advantage of this divertissement to excuse ourselves, hail a taxi, and escape, leaving all the artists and the pseudo-artists, deep thinkers, poets and world citizens to worry along as best they could. This was not the Paris to which we wished to say goodby—this was not Paris at all, but a cosmopolitan city in itself, inhabited by the near-genius of Copenhagen, Atlanta, Tokyo, Buenos Aires and Cairo.

Now the Pantheon—in a student cafe at the corner of the Boulevard St. Michel and the Rue Soufflot we drank a bock "Aux Grandhommes de la Patrie," with the dark mass of the French Valhalla rising close at hand. Another taxi to Notre Dame. The square before the old pile was dark. I thought that the gargoyles grinned down at us as we bade them fond au revoir. We drove through the narrow byways of the old Marais district. We circled

the Place de la Concorde twice, turned from the Louvre to the Madeleine and from the Madeleine down the Champs-Elysées to the Arch of Triumph, where we saluted the eternal flame at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Then along the Seine to the Champ de Mars, where the sight of Eiffel's steel ribs soaring into what seemed a limitless void overhead called forth a lyric expression, as we halted our taxi directly beneath the mighty framework and gazed up into the shadowy plexus of beams and girders, like a tower of giant spider webs.

Montmartre, of course, though that was not Paris, either. Around Pigalle our progression of regrets and fond farewells led us in concentric circles of serpentine and confetti, soft lights, champagne and boneless oriental dancers. After this giddy whirl we adjourned to the white dome of Sacre Coeur, from which vantage point the spangled velvet of Paris stretched away on all sides and the cool night winds inspired us to poetry that would have been deathless—had it been written.

Now the small hours were upon us; we hastened away from the Butte. Les Halles, the great produce markets, were already crowded with sleepy farmers and hundreds of buyers of white turnips and red game, fowls, live fish in tubs of water, carrots and cabbages. Sparks flew as heavy hoofs rang on the cobbles; wagon tires rumbled like peace-time artillery coming up to the front lines in this workaday war against the hunger of the great city sleeping roundabout. At a cafe hard by we partook, in company with an oddly assorted lot of vegetable merchants in red sashes and a few merry-makers from the

latest cafes, of a rich purée of onion soup that erased the chill of dawn from our hearts.

More slowly now we departed, wending our way through the piles of fresh vegetables—through a smell of green things, raw and puissant. We rolled into a day-lit Rue Monsieur-le-Prince. Housewives were conversing across the street with each other and watering their geranium boxes. Shop-keepers were turning up the metal shutters and washing the sidewalks. The Garde Republicaine pranced by with a jingling of sabers and breast-plates that sparkled. I descended and shook hands with Henry fervently. Would I ever forget this night?

He poised his pen to write his home address for me—and held it in mid-air as if suddenly frozen.

"Say, I'm good here for another spell. There's a lot I need to know yet about tapestries. *J'y suis, J'y reste.* Good-bye, old man—and send me a piece of pyramid!"

CHAPTER VIII

Moonlit Glamour

". . . till the traveller be somewhat used to the Sea, let him forbeare to looke upon the waves of the Sea, or much to lift up his head. To avoid the ill smelles of the ship, hee may in Summer carry red roses, or the dried leaves thereof, Lemmons, Oranges and like things. . . ."

An Itinerary Written by Fynes Moryson, Gent. (*1617*).

The first few days after arriving in Marseilles I spent in peering vainly under wickets and demanding to know in bad French whether any of the lines plying to Egypt needed an extremely able seaman, with wide experience on all of the seven seas, not to mention most of the worthwhile lakes. Nowhere did I meet with the faintest encouragement, and at last was reduced to booking the cheapest possible passage on the smallest imaginable ship, which I did. As she would not sail for a week, I spent the interim in seeing the sights of the Cote d'Or and basking in the sunshine on the beach at Nice among flocks of elderly seals clad only in bathing trunks.

One afternoon I caught the tram to Monte Carlo. The baroque whiteness of the Casino shone all sinless in the brilliant Riviera sunlight as I entered. The man behind the desk, who looked a deal like Adolphe Menjou, shook his head ever so slightly and simpered as he handed back my little red book. Confound it! I had forgotten that the occupation line on my passport read "student." I tucked a twenty-franc note in at the accusing page and

passed it over the counter. Adolphe winked with vast solemnity and bowed me in. One of the original Dockstader interlocutors in a fantastic swallow-tail, who was on patrol duty between the gaming tables, offered a booklet indicating exactly what to do and why. So I bought a handful of chips and plunged into the atmosphere of aristocratic dalliance—rubbed shoulders with villains, heroines and ingenues vacationing from purple plays and languid novels. At least a quarter of the large *Salon des Etrangers* where the roulette and trente-et-quarante tables offer their allurements was draped off like a back-stage area during alterations. The "Faites vos jeux, messieurs!" and "Rien ne va plus!" of the hatchet-faced croupiers sounded from above the clicking wheels. Then, to add an operatic touch, the band outside the garishly frescoed windows struck up a stirring march. I wandered from group to group, playing a chip here and there, winning and losing.

The majority of the "guests" seemed to be gray-haired women. As the little white ball left the nimble fingers of the croupier and travelled in smaller and smaller circles around the banked sides of the inset wheels, these wrinkled dowagers, spinster sports and gay grandmothers followed it with the hawk-like concentration of born gamblers. Many were jotting every result on thick octavo pads already covered with tables and computations.

The regular clicking, the monotonous intonations of the table attendants, the hair-trigger intensity of those about the wheels wore on me. I retired to a far corner of the salon, opposite a middle-aged gentleman deep in slum-

ber on the lounge. The band was playing a dreamy Strauss waltz. I had smuggled a small camera past Adolphe in my pocket. Now I covered it with my hat and went to great pains to take several exposures, none of which, when developed, proved to be worth the trouble.

On the next evening the *Delfia* sailed. As she steamed out of the harbor, headed away from the studding yellow flares of the city and pointed her impudent little prow past the steel sides of a Japanese cruiser towards Corsica and the velvety East, she lay almost as low in the water as a barge and made me think somehow of Noah's Ark equipped with an outboard motor. From cutwater to sternpost she was crammed with munitions and supplies for the French forces in Syria, where the Druses were being disagreeable, several batteries of 75's and scores of heavily ribbed shell containers in no way lightening the cargo. In addition, five bombing planes in as many large crates were lashed to her decks, almost filling them and increasing her resemblance to a packing case with a black funnel and two short masts. Every foot of deck space was strewn with rusty gear, chain and windlasses, a walk from bow to stern and back again being a succession of hops and skips, with a long jump to clear the pig pen placed thoughtfully just abaft the galley. Like a French farm, she had been planned for intensive use and she was getting it.

The crew and the black gang were all negroes from French Senegal. Their cheek-bones shone dully blue against dead ebony, and they mouthed their French in flannel accents. Sometimes when a row of wide black

shoulders strained on a line their charms and tattoo marks would gleam open to the sun, and, with the sweat drenching their necklaces of lucky teeth, their feet splatting on the wet deck and their long, supple muscles reflecting shiny highlights, the ship was a compound in the African West Coast jungles and the throbbing of the engines became the beat of medicine drums.

When I was not talking with these huge children, I spent my time with the family of Syrian deck passengers who had pallets near my own, and who insisted on playing love songs every night on a kind of mandolin called an ood, accompanied in a suspicious baritone by the youngest son, his checkered head-cloth especially donned for the occasion. When the French were not about they whispered of the bombardment of Damascus by General Sarrail and the slaughter of many innocent people, including some of their own relatives. Then the women would begin to wail softly and the songs became slow cacaphonous dirges, wild and woeful.

I became fast friends with the second officer, who wanted to learn English, and sometimes in the evening when another ship was passing we would compose messages for the blinker light on the bridge asking how many pretty girls there were aboard and whether we might call. We invariably received an invitation, but were never able to take advantage of it, for in ten minutes the lights were far astern.

The volcano Stromboli belched into the dark heavens as we passed and shook the sea with a throaty growl, while a crimson glow searched the skies. Our cluttered

decks ran between Scylla and Charybdis and the glimmering lights of Messina. In the day following we experienced a succession of glorious cloud effects, the white masses piling themselves into turrets, rolling chariots and sky monsters on the horizon, dyed at sunset afterglow with those warm pinks and yellows that the masters have preserved forever as cherub-beds on the walls of Florentine museums. Reality faded each evening with the light and from the *Delfia* all crudities sloughed away until revealing dawn came again.

There were nights when, with no sound but the soft swash of the white bow wave, I lay in a cranny at the forepeak like a carven figure-head and watched the dazzling moon-path. Soft winds out of African deserts blew over me—long ago they had ruffled the sails of Carthaginian triremes on red missions of conquest. Night after magic night, I could see them coming—the hosts of the Pharaohs, the phalanxes of Marathon, Rome's ordered legions—sweeping up from beyond the farthest rim, where all things began, and marching squarely down the center of that shining trail to pass me on parade. Forgotten kings and their nodding queens; emperors whose word had shaken half the world—silent, swaying columns of the vanished nations, the dimly-remembered peoples who had risen and waned around the borders of this ancient sea.

On the morning of the eighth day a low, yellow coast appeared directly ahead, with here and there a graceful tuft of palms rising over the cluster of brown domes marking a native village. We slid by the lighthouse that

stands near the site of the ancient Pharos of Alexandria, between two ships flying the red hammer and sickle of Soviet Russia, and warped noiselessly up to an obscure stone jetty. We were so unimportant that the dragomen and porters passed us up completely, which was indeed a blessing. After a bored Englishman in a red tarboosh had stamped my passport and indicated by his air of authority that the status of Egyptian independence was still somewhat uncertain, I gathered my belongings under one arm and trudged through the customs-houses, threading swarms of Arab baggagemen, Jewish money-changers and Greek immigrants into the streets of the city of Cleopatra.

Outside the Cairo station next morning ranks of cavalry were drawn up to welcome King Fuad back to the capital after a prolonged vacation. I wondered what destiny had decreed that I should be forever arriving and departing in the shadows of potentates. Watching only long enough to see His Rotund Majesty into the waiting limousine and off, followed by his cantering cohorts, I sought out the American Express and ran through my accumulated mail. In it I found a crisp check and clippings from California and Minnesota newspapers of several articles I had sent to an American newspaper syndicate from London. The world seemed to swim in delirious circles; I grinned until the clerk thought I was insane, and when a dirty little Arab asked me for the sixteenth time whether I would not see the pyramids under his protection, I repressed with difficulty a strong desire to pick him up and kiss him fondly on both cheeks.

CHAPTER IX

Scheherazade

"Betweene the biggest Pyramide, and Nylus, I saw a Colosse, or head of an Idoll, of a wonderfull greatnesse; being all of one Marble stone, and it may be reckoned amongst the rarest wonders: Some say, that aynciently it was an Oracle, the which so soone as the Sunne set, would give an answere . . . of anything demaunded."

—Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations of William Lithgow (1632)

All that is needed in Cairo to form a parade is a drum and one marcher. It was a religious holiday, and all afternoon processions had flowed by under my window, to the intense delight of the hordes of urchins who sleep in gutters and shine shoes for a living. Among others there had been a very stirring funeral, with the fez of the deceased topping the peaked head-board of a narrow bier borne on the shoulders of eight men, relieved from time to time by others who rushed out from the throngs of passersby, hoping thus to acquire merit. Later there had been a wedding, announced by a band playing Egyptian music on Scotch bag-pipes and preceded by three jugglers. In the nature of things, these latter were eminently fitting, for a divorce may be secured in Cairo by simple process of wishing for it aloud. That very day an old sheykh had achieved a headline in the *Egyptian Gazette* for having marathoned through his sixty-second marriage

in three years. His anxious relatives had petitioned for a court order restraining him from further adventures in matrimony, and the request had been immediately denied, whereupon the old gentleman had promptly taken a new wife, out of sheer spite.

A long Daimler drew up before the headquarters of the British Military down the street and an officer with very red and official tabs on his lapels alighted, disappearing through a double file of rigid tommies. The old Hajji in the faded green turban signifying that he had performed his pilgrimage to Mecca squatted at his nightly post on the corner of the Ezbekieh Gardens, his right elbow resting on an upraised knee and one cupped hand held out straight before him—whether to weigh the mysteries of life or to receive alms one could not rightly say, for he never moved and his eyes were far, far away in another realm than this. That most distinctive Cairene sound—the clang of the lemonade vendor's brass cymbals, rang out clearly. Then an Arab boy in a skull cap and flowing white burnouse rode across the square on a bicycle, balancing on his head a yard-wide tray piled high with flat cakes. In the gathering darkness he failed to see a Bedouin leading a large dromedary, and in a moment cakes were rolling in every direction. The boy shrieked, the camel bellowed and showed its teeth and its wrathful master shouted his rage in terms of all the giaours and evil demons of Islam.

Over the main gate in the Ezbekieh wall a lurid sign advertised the sympathetic celebration of the Turkish National Holiday. A midway had been set up just inside,

a military band was playing oriental marches in minor chords, magicians were performing, sword swallowers were ingesting cutlasses, and scores stood about the gates watching the arrival of the British and Egyptian dignitaries, most of the former having gone native to the extent of wearing fezzes over features as English as Mr. Micawber's. As an admission was being charged at the gate, I rounded the corner of the Gardens and was passed in at a side entrance by a tommy. On a floor in one corner of the park the soldiers were having a dance of their own, and in lieu of partners, were waltzing with each other.

I left the gardens and turned into the entrance of the Mouski, the narrow main thoroughfare of the Mohammedan city, passing a seven-foot figure of Buffalo Bill erected outside a native cinema, the small portal of which was jammed with turbaned figures. As I penetrated farther, the side-streets became narrower and more crooked. Over the stone archways of private residences the blue hand of Fatma charmed away evil spirits, or verses from the Koran served at once to decorate and protect. Before one house a flat dray stopped to unload half a dozen ladies of the hareem, each blackly swathed from head to foot and wearing a long white veil, which was attached to the head-dress by a spool of fluted brass. Women of the lower orders followed at a respectful distance behind their masters, their eyes made startling by liberal outlining with black kohl, and their bracelets, anklets, coin necklaces and bangles clinking with every step of their bare hennaed feet. Bands of tall Bedouins from the desert stalked through the crowds. An old Jew

rode by on a tiny donkey, steering him with cane taps on his after section. Two camels padded disdainfully along. Nubians, Turks, Copts, Circassians, Armenians and Syrians thronged the bazaars or sat idly smoking cigarets and nargilehs in cubby-hole cafes. In one of these an orchestra was perched on a shelf at the rear and was producing a sort of thudding dirge from a drum and two narrow stringed instruments known as kemengehs. Overhead, the streets were hung with scores of green banners bearing the crescent and three stars of New Egypt.

Midnight came and went, and still I kept going—through dimly lighted passages and under arched gateways revealing more fantastic sights than I had dreamed could exist in one city. I had not the faintest idea as to where I was, nor did I care. For this night, at least, I was a caliph in disguise, and Cairo must yield me an experience befitting the trappings of her stage.

I climbed a bank of stairs and angled off to the left down a byway that was a mere crevasse. At the far end I saw a blaze of lights and heard a measured rhythm of many voices. All at once I was in a long bazaar, entirely roofed with richly striped awnings. Colored lights gleamed down from many chandeliers upon a sea of turbans and fezzes. Soft, thick rugs from Persian looms covered the walls of every shop, showing alternate patches of clear rose sheen and cloudy purple depth. Rising in a violet haze above the hum of conversation and occasional throaty laughter, clouds of tobacco smoke mingled with precious attar fumes, touching the picture with the fanciful brush of Sindbad's chronicler as they eddied about the

lamps like billows of gauze and softened the vivid outlines into a blended masterpiece.

There was a hush. A tall pair of heavy doors at the other extreme of the khan swung slowly open, revealing the brilliantly illuminated interior of a magnificent mosque, already crowded with acres of worshippers. No one took the least notice of me as I pressed closer for a better view. Inside I could see several groups seated on the floor in circles. Those in the one nearest the door, numbering about twenty, were chanting a profession of faith in time with the rolling of several shallow drums like tambourines and the occasional shrill wail of a reed instrument. As they did so they rolled their heads first to the left, then to the right, for perhaps ten minutes. In response to a signal from an old man at one side of the ring, all rose to their feet and began to move jerkily 'round and 'round, crying "Allah!" in perfect unison and bending low with each shout. The drums beat on a faster, tighter, higher note. A black-bearded dervish in a tall hat detached himself from the others and began to revolve, slowly at first, then, as the tempo of the music and the chanting rose, at a speed that caused his robe to flare from his waist on an even plane. At the end of ten minutes he was whizzing around at least sixty times a minute, his face perfectly impassive, his eyes closed on a world that had vanished from his consciousness. I felt a terrific tension as the hypnotic influence of the drumming and the chanting and bowing and the solitary twirler benumbed the senses. Like the center of a whirlpool, the spinning figure pulled at something primeval. I had an

insane desire to rush to the center of the circle and revolve swiftly into a pleasant befuddlement of a cheap intoxication, and only the thought that I would surely be mobbed managed to restrain the suicidal impulse.

When the dervish had been circling for at least a quarter of an hour at what appeared to be an ever-increasing rate of speed and the nervous strain had become almost unbearable, he suddenly threw both hands high above his head with a ballet gesture and stopped. He then bowed once and rejoined the ring without any sign of unsteadiness. This was repeated several times with other dancers and many variations before the ceremonies were completed. I could hardly bring myself to leave the long khan. Only with the greatest difficulty could I move at all. The drums throbbed in my brain; I could hear the name of Allah like the cry of an apocalyptic angel in my ears; the world swam and reeled like the horizons of a drunken sailor. I found myself walking I knew not where, remotely conscious that it was either very late or very early, and yearning for nothing so much as a place to lie down and let the rest of the world go by, in circles.

The crowds in the streets thinned out. No one could tell me where I was—not even a native policeman whom I overtook. The first pale hint of dawn was in the sky behind me when I looked up and saw the phantom spires of the mosque of Mohammed Ali crowning the citadel before me. I forgot my fatigue. Why not climax this adventure in Scheherazade by viewing the sunrise over Cairo? The light was growing stronger; I must hasten. A bugle sounded from somewhere in the citadel and another an-

swered it. A file of sleepy camels crept across the square below the walls and disappeared. I climbed to the stone porch before the great mosque which had been built of alabaster by Mohammed Ali himself—that shrewd adventurer—and to which he had treacherously invited his enemies, the Mamelukes, and caused them to be shot down in heaps.

Behind the Mokattam hills the light strengthened into a wide ray of soft yellow. The minarets and domes of four hundred mosques and the uneven roof-tops of the city flung wide before me became a symphony of brown, darkening on the edges into the murk of the desert. The line of an old aqueduct appeared off to the south, and the uneven mounds of debris where Memphis and Fostat and New Babylon lay sleeping. Dotting the northern bareness were the tombs of the Caliphs, huddled together like soldiers cut off from the main force, fighting the hosts of decay and oblivion. The living artery of the Nile wound through the middle distance and behind it the pyramids lay on the rolling sands like unreal toys. When the first direct light shone on them twelve miles away, I thought I could see the pink flush on the face of the Sphinx as he added another sunrise to his unequalled collection. The city began to stir. A dog barked. Voices rose from the bazaars. Shop fronts were flung open. From the Alabaster Mosque the muezzin began the call to prayer in a sonorous and musical tone:

"Allahu akbar! God is most great! There is no God but Allah! Mohammed is the Prophet of Allah! Come

to prayer! La i—la—ha i—l—la—la—l—lah! Al—la—hu ak—bar!"

For several days I explored the mosques and the marts of trade—the cubby holes of the perfume merchants (sorely needed in this, of all cities)—the brass markets and the jewelry shops, the rug booths and the thieves' bazaar. I glimpsed the tea time pleasures of Cairene officialdom in the shaded garden at Groppi's and attended a movie where Reginald Denny delighted large crowds of Arabs, although the English and Arabic translations of the French sub-titles, projected by a stereopticon to the left of the screen, persisted in lagging behind and causing the characters to say strange things.

Then one afternoon I went out to Gizeh, scorning a camel to walk through the deep sand towards the pyramids of rough brown stone rising above. By dodging into a dune hollow I managed to throw the camel-men and guides off the track.

I drew a long breath, mopped away the perspiration and emptied the sand from my shoes. Then a shadow fell across my hiding place like a trap door. I looked up at a gnarled old creature with a face like a wrinkled persimmon.

"Gen'lman! Mister!"

"Well?"

"Want to know something?"

"Yes?"

"My father took care of Sphinx."

"Really?"

Tunis: a funeral

"Cairo must yield me an experience befitting the trappings of her stage."

"Carthage! city of blood and bronze; of sacrificial horror and resplendent brilliance."

A globe-girdler at Port Said

"And my grandfather——"

"Do tell!"

"And his father, and his, and his, for five t'ousand year, an' now I take care of him. Gen'lman, sir, I am myself Watchman of Sphinx!"

Custodian of the Sphinx—caretaker of the ancient symbol of Egypt! What a story that would make!

WATCHMAN OF SPHINX TELLS ALL

Breaks Silence of Fifty Centuries—Riddle Still Unsolved, Says Latest of Ancient Line.

I came up slowly from the shadow of the dune and regarded first the old man, then the great leonine form, chiseled in one piece from a small mountain of rock. The weather-beaten fraud chattered on. His name was Mohammed Ali, which he bore in common with half the male population of Islam. He lived in Gizeh, as had his illustrious forebears since the dawn of time.

I followed him in a circuit of his charge. He led me up the great paws, newly uncovered. We climbed to the back and promenaded along it like pirates on a quarter-deck. Mohammed indicated the holes in the head made by vandals, eons ago, who had come in search of treasure, and pointed to the reinforcements just under the boyish bob in the rear made necessary by erosion of the neck. He patted and stroked the old stones as though he expected the big cat to roll over and purr. His pride overflowed; his eyes shone. We sat on the sand in front of the inscribed stela that rises between the forelegs and then

and there, from the lips of the Watchman of the Sphinx I heard its story.

Recent excavations have left the figure today just as it was hewn out five thousand years ago by King Khefren, in the combined image of himself and Ra, the Sun God. Mohammed leaned back and pointed up at the nose, battered by Napoleon's soldiers, who amused themselves by using it as a target despite the heroic efforts of the then current guardian. I looked at the dull red countenance above. At that moment Mohammed's story and his title seemed quite plausible, as did his devotion.

For although the hood has been patched, the serene and really noble face has not been touched, and therein lies the magnetism that neither pen nor camera can fully translate—in those inscrutable eyes of stone that gaze steadily beyond the winding silvery sheen of the Nile and the green of its valley—beyond life, death and the tomb—beyond Egypt and this world to some far-distant sphere where must be written the answer to the great riddle.

CHAPTER X

The Bugle Call—And Silence

"The water of Nylus is marvailous sweete, above all others in the world, and that proceedeth of the extreame vigour of the Sunne, beating continually upon, making it become more Lighter, Purer and Simple. . . ."

—Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations of William Lithgow (1632)

The day was dry and hot. Despite the lush green expanses of the fields and the tumbled moist blackness of the newly plowed ground through which the train puffed, choking clouds of dust eddied through cracks around the tightly closed windows and settled over everything in a gray, oily film. My eyes stung and my nose was emery. At intervals a sweeper came through with a feather duster, leaving the atmosphere even more opaque.

The stout gentleman in the red fez and blue burnouse who faced me in the compartment was lost in the depths of a dreamless sleep, his head thrown back on the seat, mouth agape. I watched the dust pile up in little ridges on the backs of his hands, which clutched a convex paunch with an unconscious ecstasy that bespoke proud possession. Long windrows gathered on his upper lip in a tapering moustache. The upland portions of his features took on the appearance of plateaux in mountain snowstorms. With every walrus-like exhalation a column of cloudy

whiteness erupted through the bars of sunlight. I timed him as I ate figs garnished with grit. His upper lip swelled like a sail; his cheeks distended slowly, there was a sudden indrawn snort, and another gray geyser shot upward. The particles grew thicker, more blinding. The air was fogged with swirling real estate. I rose and stumbled down the aisle. Where I had sat little ripples of Libyan desert sand had outlined me on the bench. Anything to be rid of this awful grime! The train grated to a slow stop. Outside the vendors' cries rose like lamentations on the quivering air. The door of the closed women's compartment at the end of the car slid open, and therefrom issued two Moslem ladies, dressed lightly in four or five layers of enshrouding white. They were claimed by their lord and master. The door of the compartment they had vacated was open. The seats seemed more comfortable, and the windows had a double frame that had kept out the dust almost entirely. Luxor was still five hours away. Well?

I latched the door as securely as possible from the inside, and although the air was insufferably hot, prepared to breathe again. For half an hour my rest was undisturbed. At Assiut I opened the door slightly for a breath of something below ninety-eight degrees. At the far side of the station platform I beheld an entire hareem unloading from a flat dray with two wheels. Their superintendent formed them in column of twos and aimed directly at my car. Between chivalry and suffocation, I chose. Draping a handkerchief across my face veil-wise, I threw a light coat over my head and waited. Soon there

Water buffalo at Luxor

Native women at Luxor

View of the pyramids from Gizeh

"The broken loveliness of Luxor temple."

was a sound at the door. I slid it open a crack and shook my head emphatically. The fat husband looked for all the world like the original Grand Turk at a Friday night initiation. I almost laughed in his face. For a moment he seemed puzzled, then, slowly, he closed the door again. I heard his cohorts tramping down the aisle obediently after him. I lay down and tried to sleep. Fifteen minutes later the train stopped again. A series of light taps on the door became noisy drumming. Finally, kicks. (Such is a lady's privacy in Egypt). The door was shoved violently aside and a swarm of irate husbands and wives descended upon me like wolves on the fold. The women stabbed killing glances over their veils and chattered through them. The sweeper paused in his melancholy rounds to add his mite. The conductor lunged forward and shook his fist in my face. Passengers clogged the aisle and milled to and fro in the effort to see what was happening. The station agent and a corporal's guard of soldiers pushed through to complicate matters with much lusty and officious hubbub.

With as much of the grand manner as I could summon I removed my disguise and plowed through the scowling mob to my former seat, which had happily not been drifted under, feeling like little Nell being thrust out of the old homestead in the second act. The heat was passing, and with it the dust. The geyser had departed. In his place sat a young man in a white robe and a fantastic turban of many colors. He grinned amiably and forbore to mention my ejection. I smiled back at him.

"Englishman?"

"No, American."

"Yes?" He leaned forward eagerly. "Some day I'll come to New York. Lots of gold in America, eh? Say, I'm going to start a restaurant on top of a sky-scraper a mile high with camels and palm trees and call it 'The Oasis.' Maybe I could begin like a waiter and work up —— you know?"

I nodded and wondered what success magazine had started a Cairo branch.

"Where did you get all these ideas?" I asked him.

"Oh, down in Cairo. I've been studying at al-Azhar, but winters I guide American people around Cairo and they tell me about New York. One man advised me I should start a speakeasy and be a millionaire in a year. What kind of a restaurant is that, maybe?"

"One where they serve champagne."

"Yes? But what's the difference? Don't they anyway?"

Then I broke down and told him all. He warmed to the subject. For the next hour I was at pains to describe from memory data on kitchens, seasonings, service and tips. He came right back with curiosity regarding soup, salads and silver. By this time I was ravenously hungry. He had a lunch composed of goat meat and flat discs of unleavened bread, which I shared. Gratefully I detailed all the high cunning of the waiter's art. I was coasting along on an inspired passage when the conductor shouted "Luxor!" We parted on the platform.

"My name," he said, "is Zaki. How'd you like me to show you around Luxor? I live here. Tomorrow?"

"Afraid I couldn't."

"No money. Just tell me about New York. I'll be at the ferry at seven."

He was gone. It was dark and the winding lanes were illumined only at intervals by a murky lantern or the red glow of faggots before a bazaar. The moonlight gleamed along the Nile like a silver brush-stroke. I found the little pension run by the old German lady recommended in Cairo. She was the soul of friendliness. I complained of the dust and the flies. She laughed.

"The plagues are still upon us."

Just before sinking into a deep sleep from which was barred all thoughts of plagues, dust, veils and gibbering husbands, I lay silently and looked out at the velvety sweep of midnight, sparkling with thousands of the clearest stars I had ever seen. Egypt! Fifty centuries look down upon you! Out there is the Nile, Thebes of the Hundred Gates, and the wind through the palms, sighing . . . sighing . . .

Zaki was at the ferry promptly at seven. With him he had brought two donkeys and as many boys. These we loaded into a rickety little boat looking as though it might have had the original franchise from Thebes to the Luxor temple across the way. The broad brown flood moved with only a slight murmur to indicate its passage as we set sail. On one side rolled away to the pinkish cliffs the fertile green of the Theban plain—on the other, standing in massive geometric files, the broken loveliness of the Luxor Temple was creamy in the early light.

Progress was smooth until we were about fifty yards from the other shore. Then with a slight jolt, the little boat quivered and stopped. Instantly the boatman and his assistant were in the water, pushing, pulling, shouting and blowing like grampuses. Several of the dozen donkeys became agitated at this unusual turn and began to crowd. Ours were on the outside edge. Zaki and the boys grabbed for their halters in front and I tried pushing from the side. The rest of the long-eared brethren grew more impatient. Four of them pocketed me on the edge. There was no rail. I lost my balance, clutched blindly, and as I went over reflected sadly that a donkey is a wise and subtle animal. Splash!

That their intent might seem less obvious, three of them had fallen in at the same time. I struck out for the shore and so did they. I maneuvered between two of them, seized them by the scruffs of their necks, and we headed jointly for Thebes. Surely no ancient conqueror ever made so startling an appearance at the city, even alighting from a barge crested with imperial splendor.

After my clothes had dried a little Zaki and I mounted the donkeys and started across the wideness of the Theban plain. It was just after the yearly inundation, and the mud flats were cracked into fertile concave cups. From the blackly steaming earth and the green swale along the river came moist, warm harbingers of new life. Shining black-birds rose with shrill cries and soared into the utter blue of the sky. Camel trains passed us, laden with produce for sale in the Luxor markets. In a nearby field four fellaheen were ploughing behind buffalo teams

and the shallow furrows gave forth soft swashing sounds as they were flung smoking from the wooden moldboards.

The donkeys jogged along, past the temple of Seti I, and into the shimmery heat of the dry torrent-bed that is the ancient road to the Tombs of the Kings. The ravine was drowned in a brilliant yellow glare that made it difficult to look ahead. I let the donkey take charge. Several miles of this before we debouched into the valley and the cool, deep tombs, cut deeply into the solid rock and richly decorated for Eternity. From these we climbed out of the terrific heat to the brow of the Theban plateau. Far below, files of Arab workmen moved to and fro like busy ants. Descending the other side, we paused at the dainty pink columns of Queen Hatshepsut's terrace temple, nestling at the foot of the cliffs, and lunched in the shadow of the Ramesseum, that substantial memorial to Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, upon whose blackened face and shrunken body I had looked in the museum at Cairo. There the conqueror of the whole known world, the oppressor of the Israelites, now lies in a glass case, with one wrinkled claw held up before him like a scepter in that imperial gesture into which it sprang when the amazed searchers first unwrapped his shroudings.

Here at his temple stood "the traveller from an antique land," who gave Shelley his story for the sonnet on "Ozymandias, King of Kings." As I swung aloft to his great chest and surveyed those massive shoulders, fully twenty feet wide, I could not see the "wrinkled lips and sneer of cold command" for the Arabs had quarried their mill stones from his face, but I could recreate the majestic

mein of this giant when he had sat enthroned before the chief gate of his shrine in the olden days of pharaonic splendor, and I could see half the length of the shattered granite bulk almost sixty feet long, that must have been the largest ever carved in Egypt from a single rock. I felt as though I had found an old friend in Ozymandias of the sonnet. As I bent over to examine one of his trunk-like fingers, on which the nail alone was six inches long, a skulking shadow disengaged itself from the soft silence of the temple and hobbled toward us.

"It is Ibrahim, the tomb robber," whispered Zaki.

The gnarled creature looked as though he might have been Methuselah's grandfather, just released from a captivity of a thousand years in the bowels of time. From a flabby frame of wrinkled papyrus two deep-set owlish eyes sparkled with all the dark wisdom of the serpent in the garden. But when he opened his mouth a pair of gums as innocent of teeth as an infant's disarmed all suspicions. Coyly inclining his head to one side and closing his weather eye, he held a small paper-wrapped object up before me. His old tongue began to waggle rapidly, and I heard strange gurgling sounds. Then he ceased, thrust the package to me at skinny arm's length, squinted, and roguishly allowed his tongue to loll from one corner of his mouth. Safe on the bosom of Rameses, I asked Zaki to translate.

"Ibrahim says he has found hand of a princess last week in Valley of Queens. He wants to sell it for twenty piasters. He says she is ver' lucky, and four 'tousan' years old. He asks would you like it, maybe?"

I took the packet from the old man and unrolled the paper. True enough, it was a small left hand, become during the centuries it had spent in the tomb a rare shade of russet. Eons had increased its original delicacy until the tapering fingers seemed almost translucent in their smooth, fragile grace. To the tips of the beautifully rounded nails it was indeed the hand of a princess. I turned to Zaki, but he was already busy bargaining with the patriarch. His price stuck at seven piasters and I paid him the equivalent of thirty-five cents for his find, put it in my pocket and rode away, leaving him to lean on recumbent Rameses like another dateless ruin and count his money over and over. We rode around and through the grim black warrior-like temple of Medinet Habu, its outer bastions decorated with heroic figures of pharaohs leading attacks, receiving embassies, dictating laws and handing down judgments; and waded through Nile mud to the twin Colossi of Memnon, one of which was reputed in ancient times to sing at dawn each day, as numerous Greek and Latin inscriptions over their sixty feet of height attested. The temple they guarded has vanished, but still they sit, like footmen of the gods, beings of deep portent in the center of the wide, bereft plain.

The sun was declining. Zaki and I pointed the prows of our donkeys back through groves of sugar-cane lining the canals that flow toward the Nile. Already on the ferry were a number of natives squatting among their bundles. Carefully we tied the donkeys to the mast to make sure that there would be no cargo lost on the return trip. Just as the boatman was preparing to cast off, the

sail having already caught the wind, a hoarse voice bellowed angrily in Arabic. It was a tall brown son of the desert, his flowing white burnouse rippling off behind him as he ran toward the landing, half-carrying a woman and a large basket. His jaw was set and there was a glint in his eye. The woman managed to tear herself loose, buried her face in the basket, clutched it in a death grip and tried to dig her toes into the sand for a foothold. He began to berate her in tones that must have carried clear to Khartoum. Zaki and the others sat about with appreciative grins.

The man seized the basket and attempted to tear it from her but she clung to it like a leech. He began to shake her. She lifted her head and emitted one piercing wail. He shook her harder. She shrieked to the blue sky and began to jabber back at him, kicking and biting. I looked towards a larged striped umbrella about fifty feet away, under which sat two Egyptian policemen engaged in a friendly game of checkers. A series of violated screeches rent the air. The gentleman dragged the lady along past the two social policemen. She resisted and he deliberately knocked her down. She struck at him, bellowing like a calliope, and he kicked her, not once but many times. One of the policemen cocked an eye languidly in their general direction, pushed his fez back over one ear, and jumped a king. The other paid no attention at all.

The tall Arab threw the woman's basket to the deck, dashed back to shore, grabbed her bodily by one ankle and a wrist and lugged her aboard like a bag of wheat, ably assisted by the accommodating passengers. At once

the admiral cast off. The woman stopped howling and sat glumly on the very stern, her basket grasped tightly in both arms. The man shouted something at her. I asked Zaki to explain. He sniffed.

"Ah, she's nothing but his mother-in-law. She made trouble and his wife won't speak to him any more. He just yelled that if she ever comes to his house again he'll cut her ears off!"

Across the Nile once more, our little craft snubbed into the mud flats and I jumped out. The wide flood plain we had traversed was a pale green under the declining rays of the sun. Where had stood Thebes of the Hundred Gates, brazen and dominant, only a few plowmen belabored their odd teams into final efforts for the day. I sighed for the sadness of such mighty fate, and walked slowly along the river bank in the clear light that suffused through the air like old yellow wine and bathed the lines of sentinel palms. Almost before I realized it the mighty bulk of Karnak was before me. I had brought up at the ancient stone jetty, which had been the landing place for the temples. From it the pylons, pillars and breached walls were in glorious silhouette against the burning horizon. Streams of fiery glow shone through the shattered sanctuaries and colossal capitals, painting with long bars of clear flame the road of triumphal entry between the double row of ram-headed sphinxes. Here had landed from galleys of state conquering generals and priestly cortèges—these worn stones had felt their tread —this avenue had witnessed their pomp and pageantry! How many forgotten Cleopatras had been carried in sway-

ing palanquins past these files of remembering figures! How many masterful kings had stalked up this roadway to do homage to Amon, the Sun God—Amon, who now bathed with blazing red the altars of his temples?

Gradually a strange feeling crept over me that I had been here before—that I had sensed somehow in days long written into the ageless tale of Egypt the thrill of this epic ground. With a vividness too sharp for mere fancy I saw the gorgeous spectacle unfold; heard the clarion call of a fanfare of trumpets triple-tongued. Then I remembered—the Metropolitan Opera . . . waiting behind the wings with a crowd of schoolboy extras in the garb of Egyptian warriors while Martinelli sang the aria, "Ah! Céleste Aïda—" The temple scene—the preliminary ruffle of drums—a breathless hush—the first flourishes of the Triumphal March! Again I left the wings and marched in glittering processional behind the golden calves, the chariots, the captives—followed in the footsteps of Radames along this sacred way of Thebes, amid the acclamations of the people. Up the rising ground between the ranks of impassive eidolons I was marching once more, into the domain of Amon-Ra, the house of the Sun God! I sang the bold measures with formless words that came impromptu. Here was no stage of modernity, but that vaster theater of heroic memories. Here three thousand years ago had trod the real Radames, home from his triumphs—here the veritable thunder of applause had heralded his approach.

In the waning light the battered visages of the crouching figures on either side seemed to assume an added

nobility. Again they were endowed with present significance—again they lifted their heads and gazed in solemn majesty at their single votary, as he strode between them in time to music of his own imagining. The monoliths of the great portal rose before me. I paused. The chariots and the prisoners, the garlanded columns and the flower-decked maidens running beside them came to a slow halt. Who was this evil-favored being standing before the gate? He was demanding a ticket of admission—a pass from Radames! The awful truth dawned on me. During our absence in Nubia strange legions had profaned our pantheon. We must storm its walls!

Stalking away from the guardian of the gate, I picked my way around the corner to the far side of the temple's western pylon, sloping back steeply to the top far above. It was a vengeful Radames who girded himself for the climb—who grasped the jutting stones of the pylon and started upward. Lying close to the face of the wall in the effort to take advantage of the inclination, painfully securing a hand-grip before trusting his feet to search out new niches, the warrior struggled on. Little green lizards, last inhabitants of destroyed cities, ran panic-stricken from their holes between the stones and skittered off over his hands. Occasionally loose rocks and rubble would come away as he touched them, to go bounding to the ground in a trickle of dust. After long ages of bracing and reaching up, the whole horizon a few square yards of gray wall, Radames crawled over the top of the topmost cornice and lay panting—on the very crest of the highest pylon of the temple.

As I recovered I looked about, caught my breath sharply and forgot all about Radames. The orange lantern that was sinking in the western sky suffused soft last rays along the palm-lined Nile, and that patriarchal flood was richly green, with strains of darker pigment like those in virgin oil interweaving a soft and dully gleaming fabric of unearthly batik-work. A violet haze lay over the end of the valley whence the life-giving river flowed, and half concealed the other end where it twisted slowly away and out of sight. On the Theban plain the two colossi were meditating in the long shadows of the centuries. The last pink tints were draining from the cliffs against which nestled the dainty files of little square columns in Queen Hatshepsut's temple. From the mud villages along the river rose swirls of blue smoke in mazy spirals. Below me, the masses of the temple were silver-plated by a new moon. I thought of Robert Hichens' lines: "Triumph and deathless peace; the bugle call—and silence—these are the notes of Karnak."

A guttural hail from below broke into these musings. An angry voice cried, "Stop!" Looking down through the half light, I saw that it was the guardian of the gate in all his fury. Evidently I had been seen from the wretched hovels in the shadow of the temple, for a mob of ragged Arab caretakers were pointing me out to their brother below, who now needed no indication. I leaned on the stones and continued innocently to gaze at the ebbing colors of the panorama. I heard the bashi-bazouk puffing up the stairway on the inside of the pylon, shout-

ing every three steps. Finally he appeared, wheezing and crying "Stop!"

"Stop what?" I inquired with cherubic mildness.

He gestured wildly and reached for my arm. Gently but firmly I disengaged it. He regarded me with that ogre-like expression common to Egyptian policemen, and pointed to the stairs. That was exactly what I wanted. I would now get a good look at the interior without having to pay ten dollars for the privilege. I took my time about going down, which irritated him exceedingly. The hall into which we entered was, with its prodigious columns, like some Olympus in a dream. On either side sat in calm dignity twenty-foot likenesses of world-shaking emperors. Long aisles of stone led through all the grandeur of the central hypostyle hall to the exit. My captor brought me up at a little distance before a shack of corrugated metal, which we entered. At a table were seated two Arab petty officials in European dress. To them the policeman made an eloquent address on my crime in throaty Arabic. They stared at me coldly.

"You knew, of course, that a ticket is necessary to enter the temples."

"Certainly."

"Then why did you climb over the wall?"

"Because, having come five thousand miles to see them, I did not intend to stop merely because the government of Egypt insists on charging outrageous fees I can't afford."

"What is your name?"

"Ketchum."

"Catch what?"

"Catch nothing. That's my name——"

"Come, if you please, let us have no joking. You may not know it, but this is serious."

"My dear sir, I am equally as serious as yourself; someone in the far distant past chose it and it is now my proudest possession. I have fought for it, lived with it for a number of years, and when I am sad I murmur it to myself and it cheers me up. Believe it or not, it's Ketchum."

My questioner turned to his friend and they whispered together. Then he looked up at me again and on his face as he spoke there was that uncertain smirk of one who thinks he is being joshed but is not sure and is thereby distinctly annoyed.

"Very well. However that may be, you have knowingly disregarded the regulations of the Antiquities department. Do you know of any reason why you should not be punished for it?"

"Oh, I admit that I did climb the pylon. However, I don't think I altered its appearance in any way. The temple is still standing, I believe. Have a cigaret?"

He spurned it. "Under the circumstances, I shall be lenient and allow you to go free. But I warn you, any further infraction of our rules will be followed by arrest. I shall investigate in the alien records of the police the name you have given me, and if it proves to be false, as I strongly suspect, you will be dealt with accordingly."

He began to write as a signal that the interview was over. The policeman gloated as I walked out past him.

Cairo: the Nile

Cairo: the Sakkarah Pyramid, oldest in Egypt

Fortune tellers in the streets of Cairo. The women give him their handkerchiefs. He pours sand on them, straightens them out, and goes to work.

Coffee shop at Cairo

Properly chastened, I repaired to the gate of Amenophis II and sat near a stone base upon which stood a huge and solitary foot that had once supported the body of a granite pharaoh. No foot of clay was this, but a symbol of the irresistible tide of empire. There was in the very lines of the instep a kingly curve—a pride in divine ancestry. I wondered how these absolute rulers would accept the transformation of their most sacred fanes into picnic grounds for tourists, admitted at stiles as to a raree-show. As I thought of this and of the threat of the Arab official, I became aware of the friendly darkness, and a slim moon, as sharp as a shining scythe hung by a silken thread. The little mirror of the Sacred Lake gave back the reflection generously, until it seemed that a portion of the shining heavens had come to rest upon its bosom, while all around it loomed masses of sharp, palpable black that were fallen dynasties . . . the crown jewels of eternity in a setting framed by the hands of mortals.

I could not bring myself to leave. Slipping from ruin to jumbled ruin, I crept past the Sacred Lake and to the southern wall of the temple. There were sharp spikes on the gate, but they would not be too difficult to get over. Almost before I knew it I found myself on the other side. Again I saw dark file after file of massive columns fifteen feet thick rising about me like the trunks of a jungle in the Pleistocene. I slid among them to a spot between the central colonnades, where rows of tall, opaque cylinders thicker than the neck of Atlas held up the pure blue sky and the horned moon, as though they had been charged from all eternity with the buttressing of heaven and earth.

In an adjoining hall a phantom moonbeam played softly across the beard, the double crown and the mystic smile of a Pharaoh enthroned, and as I drifted noiselessly his eyes seemed to follow me.

Could it be that the chill reserve of thirty centuries needed only the solvent of moonlight? In it, perhaps these incised captives marched again into slavery and those golden chariots high above on the wall hurtled into silent battles, the stone fans waved over royal heads and merriment reigned once more above the feast tables of purple and gold, whose bright pigments gleamed at me from the walls as though the hands that drew them there had not been still these three thousand years. Only when in a more open court I saw and realized by a clearer light the cracked pediments, the broken epistyles, and the tumbled capitals, did I know that this was indeed a ruin, and the great names of Seti, Amenhotep, Thotmes, Amenophis, Rameses, Taharka, Shishak, Hatasu—they, too, were ruins, and the brave note of triumph in the pealing symphony they had written here strove on year by year in heroic counterpoint with a deep-voiced theme of decay and oblivion. Some day, whisperingly, the final chord must be played, but not while one obelisk remained, nor one lotus stela reared its carven bloom, nor one massive drum rose between these ramparts, hovering above like canyon walls.

The hours passed. Upper reaches of columns upholding crypts and chapels over the whole congeries of temples glowed softly, and where thick shadows reft their titanic bulks or blanketed their scarred bases, the highest por-

tions floated jaggedly in a pool of tenebrous gloom. From hall to vast hall I stole, finding each different from the others, and each more compelling in its moonlit transfiguration. My feet made no sound on the deeply sanded floors; only when I stumbled on a fallen entablature or a slab of tilted pavement did the ancient echoes find their voices. A moist breeze began to blow warm, earthy smells from the Nile mud flats through the chambers—the odor of old Egypt, in which she had germinated, struggled, risen, dominated and toppled—in which, tonight, her fellaheen slept beside their stick-plows and shadoof wheels, while they dreamed out another cycle of magnificence, of which this and every other inundation seemed a divine harbinger. The long moon was passing its zenith. Suddenly the gathered forces of beauty and half-interpreted significances pressing close upon this mighty, moonlit pile rolled down about me like a cataract. I *felt* Karnak. Before I had been trying to understand its motives and its meaning; now I knew that they could never be understood. I stood silently, scarcely daring to breathe, for I sensed that in such a moment, on this spot, Karnak had been conceived. Here generation after generation had reached toward the Power beyond the stars. Few places in the earth can men have striven up more nobly, and in still fewer have they climbed so high.

With the waning of the moon I hastened to the gate by which I entered. There must be no slow curtain. Once more I climbed the tall barrier of wooden palings and started down the western avenue of sphinxes to the broad Sharia el Karnak that leads to Luxor. Dimly I saw

the white road winding beneath feathery palms through the limpid darkness, but my feet were not conscious of it, nor of the little pension, nor of my room. I dreamed of moons and temples until the bright sunlight slanted across my bed and woke me. Only then did I remember that I was now fair prey for the Arab police. But that threat seemed trivial and ridiculous, for in my ears vibrated still the notes of a royal prayer thirty centuries old.

CHAPTER XI

Wickedness À La Carte

"Egypt is a long Contree; but it is streyt, that is to saye narrow; for thei may not enlargen it toward the desert, for defaute of Watre . . . toward the Est, is the Rede See . . . and toward the West, is the Contree of Lybye, that is a fulle drye Londe, and litylle of Fruyt; for it is over moche plentee of Hete."

—The Voiage and Travailes of Sir John Maundeville, Kt. (1322)

It was quite late in the afternoon when I succeeded in persuading the consular representative of His Britannic Majesty stationed at Port Said that he should not only stamp my passport with a visa for Palestine, but for India and all the rest of the Far East under the Union Jack as well, and all for the single fee of two pounds. Despite his repeated declarations that this was not bargain day, and mine that I was not intending to pay for an option on the whole British Empire, we at length reached an accord, and with much official solemnity he decorated my stained little red book with his signature in high flourishes. I shook hands, thanked him, and was passing through the ante-room when a tall, pale youth hesitated on the threshold.

"Beg pardon," he said in Oxford English, "are you the consul?"

"No. You'll find him just the other side of that door.

But I wouldn't advise you to ask him for any favors in the line of visas."

"If that were all! My ship just sailed for London with all my clothes and money aboard, and here I've missed her because the Cairo train was ten minutes late. Look at me; this is all I have to my name!"

He patted the dust from his wrinkled blue suit and turned up his soiled cuffs ruefully. In the few minutes the native servant informed him he would have to wait, he told me that he was en route home from a Ceylon tea plantation and had left the ship at Suez for an excursion to Cairo, where he had been separated from his friends and forced to take the slow train back. I wished him good luck.

That evening I was walking along beneath the arcaded frame store fronts of Main Street (that is its name, by the shudders of Sinclair Lewis), past curio stores festooned with shawls and crammed with fake antiquities, and guarded by dilapidated effigies of Bedouin sheyks. I selected a sidewalk table at one of the two principal *brasseries*—the one with the less poisonous orchestra—and gave the waiter two piasters and a commission to stun all salesmen of cigarets, lottery tickets, scarabs, French post cards, amber beads, fezzes, turtles, brass jewelry and "Murrican shines."

I sat idly watching the parade of Arabs, Greeks, Frenchmen and Armenians, punctuated at frequent intervals by parties of tourists from one of the cruise liners at anchor in the canal entrance. I noticed over the rim of a tiny cup of Turkish coffee that most of them seemed

tired and harassed. There were so many things still to be seen! They fought rear-guard actions all the way down the street with swarms of curio salesmen and boot-blacks, with each successive onslaught seeming to draw farther into the shadow of their sun helmets and increase their speed towards the ship, looming before them like a haven of refuge.

What a way to see the world! It reminded me of that species of mild neurasthenia that forces one to touch every post in every fence he passes. Under such a compulsion travel becomes punishment indeed. I was considering how often the lions of a place obscure matters much more human and important close at hand, when I saw the tall young man of the British Consulate striding down the center of Main Street. He smiled, sat down on the other side of the table, ordered a liqueur, removed his hat, and began to fan himself vigorously. His blue suit had been newly cleaned and pressed; he wore a fresh shirt and tie. Knowing the generous ways of British consuls with their countrymen, I was hardly surprised, even when he told me that transportation had already been booked and arrangements made to have his baggage held for him at the next port of call. He had drained his glass and was smoking a thin cigaret as we watched the passing show.

"I've heard a great deal about Port Said. Old sailor-men have told me it was the wickedest port on the seven seas. I wonder if there isn't something back there in the native city that might be interesting? This is all pretty tame, you know." He deprecated Main Street with a gesture.

I was about to move a tour of investigation when I saw Shorty in the distance and had a quick inspiration that things would soon begin to happen. I had met Shorty every day for a week in the immediate neighborhood of the American Consulate, waiting for a ship to lift him off the hard, hard beach. He was a mild-mannered little blond, with a habit of making the most ordinary statement an excuse for deep secrecy, guarded tones, and a knowing wink. I had bought him several meals, for which he professed an eternal gratitude. And I was aware that during his month on the beach Shorty had come to know Port Said quite thoroughly. I was sure he would invite himself to join us, making his own elaborate introduction, and he did. He offered in addition the names of the last five ships he had been out on, their tonnages, captains, and other extensive data. He was somewhat loath to show us the back areas, as it appeared that in one of the low-class dives of the native quarter he had slept for two days while his latest ship left without him, and in the goodness of his heart he did not wish to see others in the same predicament. However, we assured him that we would assume all risks, and he steered us away from the lights of the European shops and into the Arab section.

The streets narrowed. After about ten minutes Shorty led us down what appeared to be a blind alley of private houses, with a solitary orange flame in a tiny window at the end deepening the gloom. At the left sat several huddled white figures, talking in low tones. On the right was a low arched doorway. Pushing the dirty curtain boldly aside, we entered. Down three steps, through a

short passageway, and we were in a long, low-ceilinged room, resembling a wine cellar with an over-arching roof stained splotchily to the color of an old meerschaum pipe. Scattered at tables along the sides was as mixed an assortment of races and colors as I had ever seen in one enclosure. We sat down quietly and hoped that we had not been noticed, as by the volume of noise they were making half the guests seemed to be on the verge of delirium tremens. Gambling, drinking, swearing or simply lying back stupidly and looking at the opposite wall were Arabs, Turks, a motley lot of third-rate Greek and Norwegian seamen and stokers, several black Soudanese, and even three or four Chinamen, clustered silently by themselves in a corner. Shorty nudged me and whispered behind his hand that they were hashish smugglers. I wondered that they had gotten ashore at all, for Oriental crews imported as far as the canal to take over down-bound vessels are strictly confined to their quarters while in Port Said.

A greasy little Arab took our order and returned with surprising speed bearing three cracked mugs of rancid beer. I choked down a few swallows until the revolting taste, mingled with the clouds of strong tobacco smoke and the vibrating odor of unwashed bodies made the room unsteady. So this was the lowest dive in Port Said! It was more like a cage of wild animals. Yet these brawny hulks with the stars and mermaids tattooed across their hairy chests—with their heavy blue jowls and their round caps askew on clipped scalps—these were the sinews of the great ships lying in the canal; they had brought them

from the uttermost ends of the earth. Someone had taken the oars from their hands and given them shovels, but they were the same men of the galleys—it was their sweat that brought the cargoes back to port.

A man with a stringed kemengeh and another with a drum came out from behind the curtain at the far end beside the Chinamen, squatted on the floor and began to play. The uproar quieted a little. Sighting down an irregular line of turbans, fezzes and sailor's caps, I saw a fat Arab girl waddle out from behind the curtain and start a hip-dance. Her smirking lips were a scarlet smear under wide, flaring nostrils; her eyes, outlined heavily with kohl, rolled and stared like those of an obscene cow, and the brass anklets and amulets she wore clanked as she quivered to the thudding of the drum and the twang of the kemengeh. The crowd began to hoot, stamp and beat time on the tables. A husky brute reached for the girl's waist and drew her to him, laughing and shrieking. A glass flew across the room and shivered on the wall, leaving a glistering wet stain like dark blood, from which drops drew long pendants. This was the signal for a general free-for-all. But most of those who engaged were so far gone that they clinched in each others arms, swayed to and fro in an eccentric waltz, and sprawled over the benches, where some began to sing, others to laugh, and the rest to snore like northeast gales. The Chinese cowered in their corner. When peace had been restored we took one last look and went out. Shorty left us and the Englishman and I walked in the direction of the

water-front. There did not seem to be a great deal to say; we had both seen the same thing.

Along the black, shining waters of the canal entrance the burning yellow night was vocal with the chants of sable lines of grimy Arabs and Abyssinians, passing up ramps from the broad lighters like an endless chain into the high-sided ships, with baskets balanced neatly on their heads, and coming out again in a shuffling cake-walk farther down, singing and heaving away like black beavers in hoods of burlap. A liner from the Indies crept out of the Sinai desert, her searchlight boring a white tunnel through the night like Moses' pillar of fire. A long khaki freighter with sloping funnels churned slowly past and entered the avenue between Asia and Africa. The lighters swung away from another moored in mid-stream, her anchors rattled in, and she made ready to follow. I said good night to my companion and turned back to my room, only then remembering that I had even forgotten to ask his name.

I threw open my window and leaned on the sill. Somewhere in the hot night below a gramophone was playing:

"Any ice today, lady? It's nice today, lady!
How about a piece of ice today . . .?"

From the street rose two voices in shrill dispute, one of them belonging to an Arab and the other to a camel. A moist night wind from the Mediterranean rustled the palm fronds and its keen, salty smell made me think of dank, mysterious channels and pirate-haunted seas. The

hobnails of a pair of British soldiers rang out on the pavement as they turned the corner and marched past the stores where the most critical tourist could supply his every need, even to kodak films and the novels of Mr. Sherwood Anderson. I thought of the drunken sailors in the gambling dive. In how many directions would they scatter tomorrow? Quoth the gramophone:

"Any ice today, lady? It's nice today, lady!
Hurry up before it melts away!"

Out in the canal entrance, a deep-voiced siren moaned.

CHAPTER XII

I Discover Hell

"He that wil passe over the See, to go to the Cytee of Jerusalem, he may go by mony Weyes, bothe on See and Londe, aftre the Contree that hee cometh fro. . . . But troweth not that I wil telle zou, alle the Townes and Cytees and Castelles that Men schulle go by; for than scholde I make to longe a Tale. . . ."

—The Voiage and Travailes of Sir John Maundeville, Kt. (1322)

From Cairo to Jerusalem is thirteen hours on the military railway built by the British during the war across the Sinai peninsula, that pathway of vanished races. Formerly travelers to Palestine had to risk the uncertainties of a small boat landing at Jaffa's rock-bound harbor. Now they make the whole journey across the desert sands, still dotted with melancholy reminders of conflict with the Turks—tangles of rusty barbed wire, shattered huts and piles of "dud" shells.

One crosses the Suez canal from Africa to Asia at Kantarah. I stepped from the ferry, and after some discussion with the Palestine customs officials, who squinted suspiciously at luggage consisting of camera, tooth-brush and a razor, was passed through. I stopped at a canteen just outside the railroad station run by a little Scotsman with bow-legs and whiskers like those of a Sealyham pup.

His wife was coming down from Aberdeen and he was very happy.

"She should enjoy all this, what with the ships—the desert air——" I suggested.

He regarded me wonderingly.

"Well, perhaps, but not for long. After you've lived here awhile you don't notice much but flies and dirt. You happen to be looking for the pretty side and that is what you see. Stay here as long as I have and that bit of landscape over there would be nothing but several piles of sand—not very damn well arranged, either, if you ask me."

Twilight, then darkness. An inquisitive white eye opened in the distance, bore steadily down upon us like that of some nocturnal cyclops, and bathed us in a white, revealing glare. Then like an apparition the massive bulk of a liner glided by, the only sounds the churning of the propellors and the twang of a guitar. Narrow strips of rippling light from the three lines of portholes ran along the canal like the blades of a golden mower as she slid out of sight behind the dunes.

The night air was tinged with chill. I climbed aboard a third-class coach of the Jerusalem train, which had arrived meanwhile, and despite the uneven motion, curled up on a wooden seat and dropped off to sleep. When I awoke we were defiling through rocky hills, absolutely barren of growth or habitation. A more cheerless prospect than those dry knobs would be hard to imagine. Two slow hours of this before the brakes grated and the train shuddered to a slow halt at a small frame station, with the

usual crowd of mangy Arabs. Across one end a large sign in Arabic and English—JERUSALEM. Just that, no more. No seraphs with silver trumpets—no cherubims throwing up their heels gleefully on pink clouds—no archangels with harps. Sadly I entered a flivver omnibus for the Jaffa gate. We shot down the road, plowing through lanes of disgusted camels and donkeys, and pulled up with a shrilling of brakes at the square stone porte-Cochère of the Gate itself—an arrival quite after the manner of the Crusaders! I asked directions of an Arab policeman in the new Palestine police uniform—black, with splattered shoulder-straps of chain mail, and a cylindrical astrakhan hat reminiscent of the Russian steppes, with a triangular ornament of steel links. Then a British officer of the police appeared in a pillar of flaming scarlet sash that reached from breast to hips. He would be only too glad to conduct me to the cheapest and nicest little hotel in all Palestine, about half a mile down the Jaffa road, outside the gates. And he did.

From my window I could see the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and segments of the brown city wall writhing down towards the Damascus gate. Only about a hundred yards away the display boards of a cinema advertised "The Lost World," and around them were curious crowds of Jews, Arabs and Armenians, spellbound by the dinosaurs.

That day and the next I reconnoitered the city, intending to retire early the second night in order to be ready for a tramp to Bethany early the following morning. I

turned back the covers and opened the high windows to the cool night. From off-stage a dark blue floodlight suddenly carpeted the room. I pulled the covers up under my chin and found that never had I felt less sleepy. After tossing for half an hour I gave it up, dressed and in all politeness asked the little Jewish proprietor what there was to see on such an evening, that would be unique, startling and altogether memorable.

"You might go to Hell," he suggested mildly, looking over his spectacles.

"What . . . !"

"Hell," he continued, "is just at the end of this road."

"What is this—a revival?"

He laughed. "No. It's the original of Hell I'm talking about. Over beyond the southern walls is the Valley of Hinnom, where rubbish and carrion were burned, which became the Gehenna of the Hebrews. The Bible speaks of it as the place 'where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.' You remember? Or don't you read that book? The priests looked down from the Temple and pointed out the flames to the people as a symbol of what they might expect in the hereafter if they didn't behave themselves. You'd better try it by daylight, though. It's a damnable place to be at night."

I plied him with questions, receiving more and more infernal information. Promising him that I wouldn't go to Hell that evening and fully intending to keep my word, I set out down the Jaffa road. From it I sensed the wondrous beauty of the night—the clear blue night that arched its star-studded canopy over Jerusalem, quiet atop

Mount Zion. A cerulean back-drop hung behind the cloudy whiteness of the mass of domes and roof profiles, etching in soft silhouette the sky-hung outlines of the Holy City. I drank in the sheer loveliness of the picture, as, from the other side of the Mount of Olives, a white moon sailed in splendor. Soft brilliance suffused through the atmosphere; the roadway lay white like silver dust before me; all about, eternities of timeless peace enshrouded this immortal hillock. Higher rose the moon; more peaceful now the city. Where the gentle radiance fell all was plain and clear, and the shadows, lying in masses of splotchy and irregular blackness, served to contrast the better with the luminescence of the silver paint that bathed kiosk and minaret.

I strode through the Jaffa Gate; Allenby had entered here. The citadel loomed a nebulous ghost under the orb. The steps of David Street, one by one, I descended. The day's activity had relapsed into clicking games of chess and a hum of gossip among the merchants. Oil lamps burned in smoky swirls, and somewhere strings were wailing of an unrequited love. Through the covered bazaars, threading between fat turbaned merchants, a sharp turn to the left, a hundred yards of almost tunnel-like blackness, and I saw before me a crooked little street branching off to one side, climbing upward in bursts of steps and terraces, until hid for the remainder of its tortuous course by the overhanging upper stories of the crazy abodes on either side. Glimpses came through cross-barred casements of little courts surrounded by low

divans, whereon Moslem gentlemen took their ease behind large, bubbling nargilehs.

The night was as soft as velvet, and as palpable. Where gaps appeared in the uneven structures overhead, the white effulgence lay in a bizarre pattern upon the cobbles, leading me with long fingers like trickles of pure silver.

A twist to the right, and the trail terminated at a pointed arch in a high wall. The door was partially ajar and in the frame thus made I saw a sky-panel spangled with lambent points. Under the uncertain glow of a hanging lantern somewhere above sat a single white-robed figure, as silent as though hewn from solid marble. I thought of Kismet. Gathering resolution, I stepped boldly across the threshold. No sooner had I crossed than a black hand and arm shot out of the gloom from behind and gripped my right shoulder in a vise that would have stayed a charging lion. I had blundered into the Harâm-es-Sherif, site of the mosque of Omar and the second holiest spot in Islam!

With every ounce of energy I could summon, I tore from the grasp with a sound of ripping cloth, ran from the court and down the dark alley, only a little slower than an energetic sky-rocket. I cast a fleeting glance behind. There in the circle of yellow light was the shrouded white figure, motionless. It had not moved.

A rambling hour south through the Jewish quarter brought me to the Zion Gate. Just outside was the Tomb of David, beside which a lone sentinel paced up and down. I passed by the tomb, and stood all at once upon the very

brink of Hell! It was the Valley of Hinnom below me—that very grandsire of the infernal regions about which the little man at the hotel had told me—a gloomy and sinister ravine in which even the moonlight seemed to shudder as it drew trembling shadows along the broken walls. Its dark depths were renowned for the deeds of evil omen that had given its own name of Gehenna to a suppositious place of eternal torment. Time after time when the city was threatened the pyre of Topheth had been raised here in tribute to Assyrian idols, and upon it children had been thrown as burnt offerings. Under Ahaz and Manasseh savage rites and fearful superstitions incident to worship of the Sun God had centered here, and the weakling Ahaz had even sacrificed his own son to Moloch on its dripping altars.

The gulf yawned below me with an evil fascination. It taunted me with promise of its terrors. On the impulse, I started down the steep slope, away from the city. I entered willingly into Hell.

By day the Valley of Hinnom is a wild and cheerless cleft, even at noonday preserving among its scores of rock-cut tombs the ill-fated aspect which occasioned the doubtful honor of its selection. By night, when the lowest portions fill with an indigo blackness from the Styx itself, and every stone wall and melancholy cairn casts an ominous cloak across the uneven rubble from other Jerusalems, it seems that no place on earth can bear more fittingly the atmosphere of desolate loneliness and of grim foreboding associated with the personal habitat of the Prince of Darkness.

As I scrambled down the side of the Valley, out of the area of moonlight and into that of patchy shadow, stumbling over boulders and tombstones, the rock-cut crypts and cave sepulchres joined into rows of sunken eyes in whitened skulls. Brambles and burrs like those in enchanted hedges tore at my clothes; cactus spines of needle keenness stabbed my ankles; hard roots of olive trees tripped me and avalanches of pebbles bounded out from underfoot with a spitefulness almost animate.

The valley narrowed—the shadows grew thicker and more opaque—the bulk of the Mount of Evil Counsel heaved above. Upon its summit, Caiaphas the High Priest plotted the death of Jesus Christ. But a few yards away is Akeldama, the accursed field of blood bought with Judas Iscariot's thirty pieces of silver. These very rocks upon which I stand have heard the wails of children passing through the fire to Moloch. These prisoning walls have reddened night after night with the high fires of sacrifice. Every jagged rock and scrawny shrub reeks with an active and devouring devilishness; the atmosphere is surcharged with the acrid odor of evil and the fumes of brimstone; every inch of these shades is a part of Satan's cloak, dyed with the jealous hatred of fallen angels; every breath brings hints of spectral nearness; each tiny noise in the dreadful stillness suggests a phantom footfall. Is there any wonder that the prophets cursed this ground forever—that it became a loathsome spot, where eternal flames consumed the bodies of dead criminals and animals hurled down into the smouldering piles of refuse!

On the southern wall of the ravine I saw the ghastly gray of the tomb entrances above the ruined charnel-house of the Crusaders. As I moved towards it, looking upward, something whipped across my face like a stinging lash. I had a sharp impression of fingers clutching for me . . . the tenseness I felt flamed into quick alarm. I ran. All the fiendishness of the place seemed to pursue. Even the earth raised traps that I might not escape. Only by the old pool of Siloam did I halt, panting, to look back through the moonlight into mysterious Hinnom. The branch that had stung my face was part of an ancient and contorted olive tree, misshapen as by some incurable malady.

The pool was quiet, too, and its surface distilled the starshine like the lens of a great telescope. Had the waters the same mystic power as on the day when the Christ bade the blind man to wash in them, and he was made to see? The pool was brackish, now, and its odor was not sweet. Once, in the days of Hezekiah, the gardens hereabouts had been the finest in Jerusalem, and the pool itself had been a thing of marble splendor and bubbling crystalline waters, framed in a colonnade of magnificent workmanship. I scaled the mound behind the pool, built layer by layer of rubbish from the sixteen destructions Jerusalem has suffered. One might almost think that the waters below were tears wept long ago from this mass of overthrown kingdoms.

Near the wall of the Harâm enclosure I met a solitary camel padding along through the thick dust, its rider swaying with a graceful alternate elevation of his

shoulders. There was a clearly defined path into the valley of the Kedron, where, even now a scorned target for rocks and rubbish, the Tomb of Absalom, the ungrateful son, hovered as though contemplating flight from the solid and respectable company of St. James and Zechariah. The road winds up again towards the walls and past St. Stephen's gate to the Stork Tower. Here begins the warlike northern face of the city. Along a plateau leading to it, the only level approach, had swept the assaults of the Crusaders.

Hardly does it seem in the evening calm that walls could have seen here the onrush of the besieging forces of Bohemund and Godfrey of Bouillon, and dripped with their life's blood. How many times the Cross and the Crescent must have clashed on this very spot!

Now, this soil imbrued with their blood was clean and white once more. Gone the clash of arms—faded the clamor of battle. I was alone on a quiet hilltop in Judea, and the wind blew chill.

I made the rounds of the holy places. Of course most of these are holy only for the esteem in which they have been held by the millions who have laid their hearts here. The tinsel gauds which drape them add nothing of dignity. I left the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by its sunken court and wandered aimlessly in the general direction of St. Stephen's gate. I wanted open air—anything but these scooped-out alleys, often completely roofed; always jammed, confused—where one is forced into door-

ways to allow malodorous camel trains to pass and jostled by low-class Moslems, loud, dirty and offensive.

Following the Via Dolorosa, the trench-like Way of the Cross, at length I passed into the open. There, gilded by the sun's waning rays I saw the Garden of Gethsemane, just across the Kedron valley on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. The Franciscans have cared lovingly for the garden. I realized this as I entered by a neat arched gateway in the rustic brown sandstone wall, bearing the legend *Hortus Gethsemani.* I saw the monastery to the left of the gravel walk within, and on the gentle down slope to the right, a grove of venerable olive trees. Little walks ran between, edged with fragrant rows of mignonette, all abloom and purple in the warm sunshine that cast precious finger-bars across the flower beds and threw about the rough gray prominences of the trees a cloudy aura of pale gold.

As I stood rejoicing in the silence after the turmoil of the city across the valley, from somewhere in the cloisters behind stole the soft tremolo of a Vox Humana at vespers, clear and ineffably sweet, rising and fluttering in an evensong of sighs and tears and ultimate exaltation like the pulsing soprano of a woman's voice.

Slowly, I left the garden, climbed over upon the side of the Mount of Olives and stood beneath the shattered wall of a house destroyed during the war. The Virgin's Tomb was below by the Jericho road, gold domes and crosses silhouetted against a sea of brave light, dying in slow bursts of flaming ochre and burnt amber afterglow mountain. Now and then faint, blurred murmurs were

borne on the breeze from the myriad glowing domes of the Holy City. Far over on the brow of the next mountain a camel drover, infinitely tiny, led two grotesque and weaving shapes homeward. He was chanting a long, thin song that sounded at the great distance queerly like an insect buzzing in my ear. The southern sky above him was a wash of soft pink and sapphire. In its beauty I felt the urge to another pilgrimage.

It was a short journey to Bethlehem over a good road. I threaded between comely matrons in white head dresses, found the Church of the Nativity, stooped to enter the Needle's Eye, designed to teach worshippers humility, and saw the pillars of the church before me in a double file. The church itself is not ornate. Its chief interest is in the Holy of Holies beneath the choir. Here, says tradition, is the identical spot to which came the Shepherds and the Wise Men with their gold and frankincense to bow down and worship—the actual khan, or stable, where Jesus Christ was born.

Leading down to it is a short flight of stairs, dimly illumined by many small hanging lamps and candles. As I entered they made of the chamber a study in sepia, centered about the niche at one end of the rock chamber, in the floor of which is a dully shining gold star with the inscription, HIC VIRGINIBUS MARIA CHRISTUS NATUS EST—"Here of the Virgin Mary Christ was Born." The Grotto of the Manger was just to the left—a tiny vault. The manger itself is the most cherished possession of Santa Maria Maggiore, in Rome, but here the

stone recess where it rested may be seen, in the mellow effulgence of four hanging lamps.

Through the soft gloom threaded an old man with a staff, who kneeled, kissed the star, and prayed. One of those women of Bethlehem whose fairness betokens their descent from the Crusaders entered, crossed herself and went out. And others seemed to come and go—apostles and sandalled friars, monkish students and inspired kings, martyrs and mitred priests. Half-forgotten fragments leapt through my mind—the shining haloes of the Masters—Prince of Peace—Adoration of the Magi—"in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the King—" "Silent Night, Holy Night"—"Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men." As I half turned to leave a cassocked priest entered softly and began to light candles on the altar, noiselessly, deftly, one by one, just as, before many days, other candles on evergreen trees in far northern lands would gleam out across the snow.

CHAPTER XIII

Floating Menagerie

"I thinke I saw the strangest Sea that ever was seene; which was, That the burning or glittering light of the Sea did shew to us, as though all the Sea over had beene burning flames of fire; and all the night long, the Moone being down, you might see to read in any booke by the light thereof."
—Voyages of John Davis, the Navigator (1598)

Before leaving Port Said I had made the rounds of American, English, French and Italian steamship offices in the hope of getting a berth aboard a ship bound for the Far East. Everywhere refused, I had tried the consulates. The American Consul had sent me to the German Consul, who inferred that there might be a possibility of being placed as a workaway on a freighter that was due in ten days, for which service there would be a modest charge. I had signed on the dotted line without further ado and left at once for Jerusalem. On the day of my return I sauntered into the consulate to ask about my ship. She had arrived from Malta one day earlier than expected. Even then, the spectacled Teuton behind the counter calmly informed me, she was preparing to get under weigh. Perhaps it would be advisable to hurry.

Perhaps! I tore out of the room, down the stairs, scorched along Main Street to my room, packed everything in two and one half minutes, and marathoned to the

Jerusalem: the arch under which Pilate gave Christ to the mob

The author on the side of Cheops, the Great Pyramid

Port Said—"the arcaded frame store fronts of Main Street."

Port Said—"curio stores festooned with shawls and crammed with fake antiquities."

debarkation sheds. After the customs, with maddening deliberation, had examined everything but my views on naval parity and my intelligence quotient, not forgetting to pry the movie camera carefully apart for dynamite or code messages, I ran through the shed and, throwing my bag into the nearest cockleshell, bade the boatman bend the oars around the locks in the direction of the *Falkenfels*, anchored temporarily in mid-channel, or I would bend them over his head. This naïve assertion produced the required effect, and presently we were bobbing through the maze of shouting, speeding, vari-colored traffic of the canal, where Suez avenue intersects Mediterranean boulevard. Plutocratic motor boats almost sheared me off; fishing craft waddled in with the day's catch; swarms of pestilential shallow bathtubs hung around offering the usual curb market attractions.

We drifted past a floating island of coal barges, alive with Abyssinians draped in burlap and so black that their profiles seen in silhouette against the coal offered no relief whatever. I coaxed the oarsman to greater speed, for the funnel of the *Falkenfels* was trailing white plumes of steam, and the blast from the siren smote my ears unpleasantly. We passed into the shaded canyon between two great hulks bound in opposite directions, one a P & O Britisher and the other a Messageries Maritimes vessel coming down for Indo-China. I realized that there would be barely enough time to get out to the ship before she sailed. Suddenly the boat stopped with a jerk that almost pitched both of us out. The boatman looked at me in consternation. We had fouled a thick hawser stretched across the

canal from one of the coaling steamers. All our joint efforts seemed unavailing. The *Falkenfels* blew her siren thrice and I heard the rattling of a capstan hauling in an anchor. I was terribly conscious that if she got away I might have to wait weeks for another. I took command, and twice we essayed the barrier in vain, alternating at the oars. Meanwhile we had attracted almost the audience of a fashionable yachting event. The two upper decks of the ships were lined with passengers offering advice through improvised paper megaphones, waxing clever at our expense, or making bets as to our success. Even the Abyssinians paused in their labors to shout encouragement.

Finally, and as a last resort, I motioned my oarsman to backwater for about fifty feet. I brought my bag into the stern, leaned over as far as I could without falling into the water, and called for full speed ahead. The boatman, with roseate dreams of baksheesh pricking the sides of his ambition, churned the turbid depths like a Mississippi stern-wheeler. And with me hanging stiffly off the stern like a Russian figurehead doing the csardas we charged for the barrier, shot out of the water, balanced precariously for a moment and began to slide off on the other side. Just as we poised on the cable I struggled up to throw my weight the opposite direction, slipped, and plumped overboard, hanging to the gunwale with my heels. I crawled in, once we were safe on the other side, and we did the intervening distance to the *Falkenfels* at a clip that would have made any varsity crew jealous, with the cheerios of our audience ringing in our ears.

The *Falkenfels* churned her stubby bulk out of the sparkling blue of the Mediterranean and into the dun reaches of the canal. The gigantic figure of De Lesseps on the breakwater where I had lounged through many drowsy afternoons slid by to starboard, his outstretched arm pointing the way triumphantly, as befits a cleaver of continents. Nondescript Port Said sank from sight; yet for a long time I could see the soft yellow patch where the sun struck the domes of the Suez Canal Company building, and the black column of De Lesseps, his arm now lifted in farewell. Asia to port—Africa to starboard. Through lakes and marshes the canal wended its way, while on both sides sand dunes piled and tumbled into clear desert distances.

Quarters were crowded; as soon as the Suez Canal pilot was dropped I was given his cabin. Johann, the steward, had a brother in Nebraska and in token of our mutual interest, managed to smuggle me a bottle of beer daily. The sailors were friendly, and when darkness fell each evening on the Red Sea the second engineer and Heinrich, the sailmaker, to whom I was apprenticed, would bring out their mandolins and play plaintive old German folk-songs that died strangely under the stars of Arabia. Mornings of oakum and splices, sewing canvas with an awl and stabbing fingers at every third stitch —long afternoons of tarpaulins and hatch covers. Nights of drifting splendor under the languorous eye of a tropic moon, as we parted white and phosphorescent seas—leaping fires of flickering incandescence that soughed by

almost under the rail and charged the night with a weird and unearthly brilliance.

The first officer was much interested in America, and called me up to the bridge often in the evenings. He showed me how to estimate the height of a star from the horizon by sighting up in hand's-breadth measurements of nine degrees each. Sometimes I would take the wheel, in the faint foot-light glow of the binnacle, taking care alternately to hold her dead ahead for a certain white Indian star and to prevent a shivering compass needle from yawing too greatly to left and right of the course. No feeling of power and responsibility quite equals that of piloting a ship through the night, even though that ship be a freighter laden with calico and castings. An orchestra conductor, a generalissimo, a dictator—each knows something of the god-like feeling, but not its entirety. That is reserved for humble pilots, and proves that there is a law of compensation in this world, after all.

Sometimes I spent the evenings with the sole full-fledged passenger, a good-humored, falstaffian person from Berlin, who was loud in his announcements that India was a "rotten country" and lamentations that he had not stayed in New York, where he had been as a young man, in his capacity as textile salesman. One evening he asked in a hoarse whisper whether I did not know of a rich American lady who would like to marry a baron, a German baron. All affluent American females loved titles, *nicht war*? I asked why he was so interested. He sighed and informed me that the baron owed him a large

sum of money, and this was the only way he would ever get it back! I am still receiving applications.

We ran past the minarets of Mocha, coaled one night at Perim Island, on the very tip of Arabia, sailed next morning through the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, sighted the rusty hulk of a recently wrecked freighter on a barren headland and swept out into the Indian Ocean. For two days the seaway was heavy; great waves like howling furies swept over the forepeak and broke in hissing foam amidships; we crossed decks balancing against the roll of the ship and clung to iron ladders like flies as the upper works swung out what seemed incredible distances over the swirling wastes of waters. The regular *bamm-m-m! whe-e-e-s-s-sh! bamm-m-m! whe-e-e-s-s-sh!* became formal markers of time like the ticking of a prodigious clock, until the shivering of the whole fabric after each blow was no longer noticed.

One thing was interesting even more than Von Tirpitz, the dolphin, who followed the ship for several days and on moonlit nights would roll over until the light gleamed on his white belly as he grunted thanks for scraps thrown overside. More than the canaries and golden-haired marmosets in the custody of a Hindu down 'tween-decks, the latter of which very much resembled lions, and were being brought by special guards to stock the gardens of a rich maharajah. That was the plight in which I found myself at meals. Here absolute silence reigned. The others seemed to anticipate each other's desires in order to save words and energy. From the moment when the steward put the first dish into play

until Heinrich brought his fork to a sharp port arms and the zero hour came; from that moment on, no sound was heard but the rending of limb from lamb, the dull thudding of reinforcing regiments of potatoes and the burbling of wounded melons. Each time at table I was left far behind. I felt deeply abashed as I hurried on through the heavy silence of the toothpick interval with the weighty disapproval of my opponents searching out every flaw in my form. But my cunning grew with experience. Amid the sloshing of the sweet soups, the odor of sauerkraut and the clean smell of large slabs of cannonball cheese, I chewed furiously and with utter concentration. Soon I was beating the engineer to the tape. But I never overtook Heinrich.

One afternoon when the hot sun was slanting to the horizon and shooting thin, white streamers of light along the crests of the rolling swells, Heinrich and I were up forward in the lee of the raised fo'cs'le-head busy with the manufacture of canvas life-boat covers. We had worked steadily for some time when from the wide mouth of a nearby ventilator came a chorus of full-throated warblings like the ringing arpeggios of a Metropolitan soprano. Heinrich wet his thread and pushed it through the eye of an awl.

"Loud voices for canaries—no?"

The trilling continued, increasing in volume. Such canaries! They must be as large as roosters, at very least! Now and then one shrill high C would soar out of the ventilator and go shrieking away across the deep like the voice of a locomotive whistling for a crossing. Heinrich

dropped the awl and cocked his head to one side. As he did so a yellow ball hurtled from the ventilator with a shrill scream like a bomb-shell from a mortar, and described a parabola to a square landing on Heinrich's head. For one frozen instant his pale blue eyes stared into mine with dim horror; then with a loud shout he grappled with the Thing. They rolled in the canvas, struggling and uttering fierce cries in which Heinrich's rumbling tones played along underneath the Thing's shrilling like a basso motif in a symphony.

"*Donnerwetter! Was ist? Mein Gott!*"

"Shre-e-e-e—Whe-e-e-deedededeedeedeedeee——"

I seized a corner of the writhing canvas and pulled. Appeared Heinrich, red, flustered, and swearing as only a sailor can swear, holding tight to—what was it? A rope's end? It was not. It was a monkey. His tail slipped through Heinrich's hand and he leaped clear, warbling merrily, doing playful little handsprings up the foremast to a boom, where he swung to and fro, grimacing quizzically at us with his wise little old man's face.

Other screeches from the ventilator—two more golden-haired simians bounded out and across the deck helter-skelter. Another followed, and still another, peering coyly about before capering up masts, through cabin deadlights, and to the bridge itself. We gave up counting and set ourselves to a vain endeavor to drive them back down the ventilator openings. The captain burst upon the scene, stared dumfounded at the spectacle of yellow marmosets dangling from the rigging and playing ring-around-the-rosie about the capstan. He bellowed hoarsely.

The crew came tumbling from the corners of the ship. For the next hour the deck looked like a circus at feeding time. Below decks the marmosets were tearing up papers and breaking bottles; several wandered into the engine room and retreated from the flashing pistons with cries of wild alarm. One spilled a flask of iodine over the engineer's dress uniform, burned his nose, and ran wailing to the deck. One perched on the binnacle and made faces at the man at the wheel. Two agile little villains were pursued to a masthead, where they remained for twenty-four hours practising tight-rope walking and trapeze work on the radio aerial.

One penetrated aft to the galley, stole some goodies and fell into a pail of hot water. One busied himself below decks opening the doors of cages holding hundreds of the maharajah's parrots, parrakeets, macaws and canaries, which presently came flying up through the ventilators and perched themselves in rows all over the ship. The captain ran to and fro like a wild man issuing orders which proved ineffectual and which the birds and animals treated with a splendid disregard. After much wild chasing hither and yon a council of war was held, and it was determined to starve the enemy into submission. For twelve hours we bowled along like a menagerie-ship. The parrots made peace first, the other birds straggling one by one into snares of netting and canvas. But for three days the marmosets continued to prowl through the vessel at night, perch on the flag-staff, and affright the hot nights with their high falsetto hymns to the moon. Not until we were one day from Bombay did Ghandi, as we

had called the last irreconcilable, succumb to the pangs of hunger and a tightly closed galley. The Hindu in charge latched the door of his cage and breathed a long sigh of relief. His head was safe.

Two weeks had passed. One morning there rose from the eastern sea the shores of India, in a misty haze of light blue shot through with an aurora of rose tints. My salesman friend pointed out the lions—that was the Apollo Bunder, this Malabar Hill; that innocent green hummock was bristling with fortifications—yonder was the Back Bay development. But I stood silently in the Oriental dawn. India! Rimsky-Korsakov's haunting melody sang in my brain. Land of eternal mystery and ancient conquests—what would it hold for me, this land of India?

CHAPTER XIV

Salaam, O Cow!

"Here be many and boundless marvels . . . the Indians never kill an ox, but rather honor him like a father; and some, even perhaps a majority, worship him. As for the women . . . the blacker they be, the more beautiful they be held."
—Marvels Described, by Friar Jordanus (1321)

The last hawser rippled to the dock and was made fast. I shook hands with the captain, grasped my bag, donned my sola topee, and marched down a swaying gang-plank into India, planting my feet very firmly in order that the impression would be properly registered. The Bombay Port Trust found amongst my three shirts no artillery for the rebel hill tribes and passed me with honors. Outside the gate I stopped stockstill. Here was a busy intersection, with several files of trams and motors in each direction standing in respectful silence, while the drivers and motormen chatted back and forth or read newspapers. One seemed quite asleep. My eyes sought for the cause, and rested upon a cow lying across the tracks. She was not an ordinary cow, such as I had chaperoned across the Atlantic, but a bovine of aristocratic mein, chewing the cud of contemplation. Then and there I dropped my bag, sat on it, and resolved to see this out. Perhaps fifteen minutes elapsed. Then the cow sighed gustily, rose in a leisurely manner and strolled into a

nearby shop. The motormen folded their papers, took the controls and were off. The chauffeurs sped away. But I followed the cow. What business would she have in a chemist's shop?

As I entered she was looking with mild interest at a stack of colored bottles on a table near the back of the store. In passing she lunged against them, knocked several off and scattered white pellets all over the floor. Some of these she proceeded to lap up, but they were evidently bitter, for she pranced about, waggled her ears and spat them out again. Then she trotted briskly for the door, evincing her displeasure by bowling over a small show case full of surgical supplies. The Hindu shop keeper wrung his hands and mumbled, but moved not an inch. The cow ambled into a nearby cloth bazaar and, with a bored expression, began to chew a bolt of calico. I left her to her fate and pursued my own.

Climbing into a vehicle known as a tonga, I directed the driver to the Y. M. C. A. Now the tonga, I am sure, was cunningly contrived by some ancient misanthrope. With its two wheels, a seat in front for the driver and another behind for the passengers, it is gauged for balance so that at the initial impulse pony and passenger are off immediately, but in opposite directions. I bit the dust and ran after the thing, shouting. The second time I managed to get a half-nelson on the driver and hung on, despite his protests. Now and then we passed other chariots resembling peanut wagons which I learned were ekkas. In these the driver had barely enough room to

crouch inside, while the passengers squatted on the counters, lacking nothing but sale tags.

The Y. M. C. A. was a rambling structure with bare cells for chambers, cots with one sheet and no coverings, sheer curtains over the doors and glassless windows. The utter openness seemed somehow ghastly. I wandered downstairs, past the doorways where native servants lay like dogs to do their masters' bidding. The chairs in the reading room were of the chaise longue variety, with a separate rest for each foot, and upon them reclined several young men, languidly turning pages of the *Times of India.*

Outside, a sky of hot, white silk intensified the rayless ardor of a sun that was nowhere to be seen, yet seemed to span the horizons and fill all space. At sea the winds had been fairly cool; here the air was close and tense. Flights of black vultures wheeled lazily overhead, soaring for incredible distances without moving a wing.

The pavement was warm underfoot, and there were red splotches on it at regular intervals. On the corners of buildings and the lower reaches of telephone poles long crimson streaks wove strange designs of which Bakst might have been proud. I wondered whether the municipal authorities of Bombay had gone in for some sort of modernistic decoration. There were some really beautiful carmine cloud effects out of which I could evolve animals, faces and castles. What was it—blood? Had the Hindus and Mohammedans engaged in one of their frequent religious battles? I looked about for signs of strife, but all I saw was a Hindu squatting on his heels at the

curb, knees rammed into arm-pits, from which his arms were extended as stiffly as though he were in the pillory.

Then it happened. There may be more frightful spectacles on this earth than a betel-chewer with his mouth flung wide open in the ecstasy of a yawn, but if there is I hope to be preserved and defended from them. St. George's dragon and the entrance to Hades lose caste beside it. Nearby was a betel bazaar where the insidious chew was being mixed on little green pan leaves and piled in neat heaps for the evening sales. There must have been enough pigment in the lot to dye the Red Sea the color it advertises, or to paint all the barns in Kansas. Instead, it was destined to adorn the streets of Bombay.

There was little of interest in the torrid streets at an hour when almost everyone was indoors. I walked along the quiet Apollo Bunder to a white arch—the Gateway of India! Why not try its potency by passing under it? When a country has an official entrance, there is no reason to come in the back door. I picked my way through a swarm of recumbent betel chewers on its seaward side, took a deep breath, and strode through. I was now properly in India. Something had to happen; I decided to follow the first trail that seemed promising. I stood and stood. Nothing appeared. Somewhat disgusted with my luck, I was starting away when out of a nearby building came a bronzed young man carrying three bulky packages. He turned in the same direction. I hastened.

"Can't I give you a lift with those?"

"Why thanks, they are pretty clumsy. A boy was

supposed to get them, but he hasn't shown up. You are an American, I take it?"

"How did you know?"

He laughed. "How could I help it? I've never yet heard an American who didn't talk through his nose. That is," he added apologetically, "it sounds that way to us."

"That *is* strange, because every Englishman speaks as though he had just taken cold."

He laughed again. "Well, we all dance to your jazz music, which is more to the point, and if a saxophone isn't a nasal instrument I don't know what is. Score against the British team."

We chatted until we reached his office, where two natives ran out, picked up the bundles and carried them upstairs. He held out his hand.

"Thank you very much. I'd like to take you around the city and show you the sights, if you'd care to go. There's a lot here of interest to a stranger, what with the bazaars and the Towers of Silence——"

"Towers of Silence?"

"—Yes. Malabar Hill, you know, where the Parsees give their dead to the vultures. Oh, it's delectable—very—especially just after a full dinner. Tell you what—come around to tiffin tomorrow and we'll do the gymkhana at the parade ground and end up on the hill. What say?"

"Delighted!"

"Cheerio!"

He ran up the stairs. Next day we lunched together

at his home, waited upon hand and foot by a corps of excellently trained serving boys in spotless white with blazing red sashes. White covers were spread on a shaded terrace, electric fans hummed, ice tinkled in long goblets and a very pretty sister named Vivian, home from school in the hills, added materially to a scene already Elysian to my sea-weary eyes. She was pouring my tea.

"I do think you have the most striking name, Mr. Ketchum. It's so refreshingly different. However did your ancestors manage to think of it?"

"Don't tease me. I've gotten into lots of scrapes because of that name. Some people won't even believe it is a name. Egyptians, for instance."

"Oh, but I mean it. What does the average name mean but a few letters and a jumble of syllables, pronounced every which way? Here you come from the land of do-it-now on a series of tug boats and freighters, bound around the world on a shoe-string with that device on your shield—KETCHUM! What could be more perfect? Tableau!" She waved a fork in an heroic curve and rose. "We have with us today a knight errant set on the accomplishment of epic deeds in defense of the weak, distressed and beautiful—now hot in pursuit of any or all of these, but chiefly the latter, and often may he Ketchum! Good Lord, we're late, Bob, where's the car?"

Bob found it and we rushed off to the cricket match without delay. It was as interesting as they ever are. One man appeared to be at bat all afternoon, and must have made more runs while we watched than are scored in the American League all season. Finally they marched

off the field and the gymkhana began. Simultaneously Vivian vanished. Horsemen pirouetted their steeds through difficult tricks that made me think of Vesuvius and ache. Some raced backwards or jumped high hurdles; others competed in obstacle races and paired events. One particularly daring rider did everything but somersaults, receiving as his reward a volley of cheers from the usually quiet stands. He rode past us to receive a trophy and waved gaily. "He" was Vivian!

Later in the afternoon as we were again getting into the car she ran up breathlessly and hopped into the seat beside me, rosily and freshly charming as ever.

"Tell him about the garden party," her brother suggested.

"Oh, it's really not much, except that we were out at a lawn fete near the Parsee Towers one afternoon and something fell into a saucer of lemon ice that a lady was eating, and it turned out to be a Parsee's toe. One of those dreadful vultures had dropped it. For that matter, we find parts of dismembered Parsees on the lawns quite often . . . now don't look directly, but there's a rich Parsee family over there now."

I looked indirectly and saw an aristocratic gentleman in a cutaway and a hat of shiny black shaped like a horse's hoof, accompanied by a beautiful woman draped in a blue sari trimmed with gold lace that sparkled in the sunlight. With them were two little boys, wearing round tinselled hats. These were the people who gave their dead to the vultures!

Our car drew up at the foot of a long double flight of steps. An attendant beckoned silently. Without a word, we followed up the staircase . . . one . . . by . . . one. Our gaiety fell away from us like a mantle suddenly cast off. I had a quick impression that we were captives being led to a scaffold. Somewhere a spirit orchestra was playing a dead march, and its depressing rhythms drummed—drummed—drummed in time with the measured throbbing of my heart.

At the top of the stairs the Parsee paused and his arm swept in an arc toward the palm-lined ring of Bombay harbor curving away beneath us. There was the warm surge of life in the hot sunlight—here the cold repose of death in a shaded garden. Yet from one to the other was but an instant of time! A few steps higher, and we were in a landscaped covert, tastefully laid out with colorful flowers and shrubs. But among them, like harbingers of doom, like prophets of calamity, we saw five squat white towers about twenty-five feet high, brooding through the breathless hush of the afternoon heat. Their mystic walls had a weird fascination. Yet were it not for the sullen lines of evil-eyed birds roosting eternally on their ledges, surely no one would impute to them so gruesome a character! The Parsee began to speak in a slow sing-song:

"Dust thou art; to dust thou shalt return—naked we came into the world; naked we shall go out of it. Ages ago Mohammedan armies drove our fathers from their native Persia into Hindustan. With them they brought the faith of Zoroaster—worship of the one true God, and a reverence for the holy elements of this world—air, fire,

water and earth, as the visible works of the Eternal. So do we, their descendants, believe today.

"The bodies of our dead cannot be burned, nor buried, nor sunk in the deep sea, nor yet permitted to decay, for each method of disposal would profane a sacred sphere of creation. In that small chapel are administered last sacraments. Inside there blazes the sacred flame, never beheld by other than a Parsee eye during the centuries it has burned. From the chapel the body is borne to the tower, placed on a grating across the top, and stripped of its shroudings. Two hours, and nothing remains but bones. The sun and the rain change these to dust, which is carried to the central well of the tower. From there at points in the wall drains run down to the sea, filters of charcoal assuring it shall not be sullied. Dust to dust—that is the beginning and the end."

He indicated what I had already observed—that one of the five towers stood a little apart from the others in a little grove of trees. This was the repository for all unnatural deaths—drownings, murders and suicides. This is not because of the nature of death, but because the corpses are touched afterwards by the hands of Mohammedans, Hindus and Christians among the police, or in the morgue during autopsies. The discrimination makes no difference to the vultures; they flock about this tower equally with the rest.

It was a chapter out of Poe. It was a nightmare come true—these horrible fat birds with their hideously naked necks, huddling silently or preening their glossy black feathers—they were damned souls working out some

strange purgatory under the lash of unseen devils—they were unspeakably malign demons projected into this world on the prongs of a satanic trident as envoys from the archfiend of darkness.

On the way down the stairs we passed a party of masked bearers carrying a body up the side reserved for that purpose. Long before they had reached the top, scores of black shadows rose against the sun to wheel slowly overhead in an aerial dance of death. Never a cry did they utter; those sinister circlings were more significant than any sound could be.

A few minutes, and there was an ominous fluttering of wings—a few sharp, cold screams as they swarmed to their ghoulish orgy. Dust to dust. . . .

"Come along!" shuddered Vivian. "This gives me the creeps. What on earth shall we do to take away the taste of this perfectly awful place?"

For one thing, we danced until almost one o'clock. But in the most preposterous corners and over the loveliest shoulders I fancied I could see the ghostly white shapes of five low, white towers amid the silence of the dead, upon which ranks of dismal birds were waiting . . . waiting. . . .

Tourists visit little Elephanta island in Bombay harbor in launches specially provided by Thomas Cook & Son and are shepherded through the marvellous caves by guides. I went in a little native packet as the only white man on board, and just to make for a more friendly atmosphere I bought a large wad of betel and began to chew.

Began—that is as far as I could get. Before long the very sight of the reddened deck was enough to cause flutterings amidships. I gave it up.

Green islands bulged from the waters and sank into them again; here and there islets of fishing scows with stumpy masts slanting crazily forward lay on the bland green surface like miniature Sargassos. Palms limned the higher portions of the land masses against the sky. Over the world lay a languid feeling of easy living. Now and again groups of natives would surge over the rail into rickety boats and be rowed ashore. Bombay dreamed out of sight behind a veil of hot haze like shimmery gauze. I was in a strange land.

Elephanta proved to be an unimpressive little island—yet Cap'n Cook drawing nigh his palmiest isle in his finest gig never felt more the joy of exploration than did I, erect in the stern of a tiny coracle of clapboards, approaching the rock jetty. I sprang ashore and climbed upward along a winding path into a region of scrubby undergrowth and stunted trees that edged the trail.

What was this? A thin wail like that of a small animal quivered on the air. I looked apprehensively into the boughs but saw nothing. Then I rounded a bend of the path and it stood before me—a little brown baby, quite naked and unafraid. He ceased crying and regarded me uncertainly while he chewed his thumb. From a tiny hut just off the trail came others, pattering in bare feet. They ran alongside with hands outstretched. I left them satisfied with a few pice at a curve where the trail plunged into a still denser thicket. They were waving madly and cry-

ing out at intervals exactly like Happy Hooligan's three nephews.

Presently the path widened and led upward in a series of twisting zig-zags into the cool gloom of the caverns. There was no other soul in all the wide expanses of the dark chambers—the deep halls hewn from solid rock ages ago by stalwart Vedic conquerors from the North. I found myself staring into the three huge faces of the Hindu trinity—Siva, Brahma and Vishnu—whose great stone features gazed down in the soft light like angels on the last day. I wandered into little recesses and black chambers intended for the most secret rites of an ancient worship. In one of these was a stone altar of sacrifice, still dark with votive blood. There were frescoes and reliefs on the walls made when mankind was emerging from the darkness—faces with simple smiles or lowering frowns; sad elephants in mournful procession with placid pundits on their backs.

Broad beams of yellow light shining through the pillars striped the floor of the chamber like draw-bridges over a bottomless pit. As Brahma smiled inscrutably at me, the bars lengthened and made timorous obeisance to his throne. Then the quiet coolness was shattered by the voice of a Guide with a Cook's party. I left them the field.

The sun was quenching itself grandly in the Indian Ocean as I reached the jetty again and sat at the end to await the coming of the Bombay boat. One other passenger was there—a little old fellow in a prodigious red turban as large as a fair-sized market basket over a face whose hundreds of merry wrinkles and beady black eyes

bespoke long life and many adventures by the way. He came forward like an elderly Vizier out of Sindbad's tales, carrying a bundle wrapped in coarse cloth, which he put down carefully between us before sitting down.

"Salaam, Sahib."

"Salaam——"

"You have been to the caves?"

I nodded. He produced two oranges and insisted that I accept one. We stripped the peelings off and spat out seeds while he told me tales of his wanderings, his face shining as he spoke of durbars and wars, pilgrimages and mendicancy on the Indian road. I turned from scanning the horizon for the boat to listen more closely and watch the play of his weazened old features. My knee rested against his bundle.

"Sahib, you will see many strange things in India—such matters as never your eyes beheld. Have you ever seen a man throw a rope to the sky, climb it and go out of sight? No? There are Indian magicians who do that. I have been to England as a sailor in the old days but no such miracles did I see there. There are wonderful things here—this is a land of marvels, Sahib. . . ."

Galloping horrors! What was this before me—its evil eyes glittering? Its tongue shooting out like cold flames? Its hood with the hideous white markings?

Cobra!

I sprawled over backwards in an ungainly somersault and rolled down the slope of the jetty into the shallow water, followed by a small avalanche of pattering pebbles. My head and a rock came into forceful contact and I

counted several hundred new constellations. After a minute I stood up unsteadily, knee-deep and at a safe distance. Where had been one snake there were now three. The Vizier peered over, grimaced comically and dragged them forth, gently scolding. They wrapped fondly about his neck and wove back and forth in adoration.

I retrieved my floating helmet and clambered up again. To reassure me the Vizier produced a set of pipes and blew a skirling melody to which the vipers swayed in a sinuous dance. In the midst of the entertainment a sharp, furry nose popped from a smaller sack in the large one, like a jack-in-the-box that squealed when the brown hand covered it. The snakes stiffened into ramrods of defense.

"Mongoose," said the old man. "Give me eight annas and I show you something, Sahib."

He produced a smaller snake from the viperous mass and allowed it to wriggle rapidly for several yards. The mongoose was watching. He was spotted and looked like a weazel. He had little red eyes and a large tail, the poise of a ballet dancer and the speed of a torpedo. As soon as he was released he became a thing of steel springs. The snake arched high, hissing, its fangs running in and out. The little animal tautened—for a moment they fenced. Then, the cobra struck, missed—struck again, and scored. In a flash the mongoose had him by the neck; was shaking him furiously. Shining coils wrapped the furry body, writhed, tensed and fell loosely away, twitching. The mongoose crawled back to his master, breathing heavily. The old fellow plucked several leaves from a mysterious

plant, which the animal nibbled slowly. It counteracted the poison and saved the mongoose, explained the Vizier.

Now the steamer was nearing Elephanta; a small boat transferred us and the bundle. I am sure that, as the dusk closed around the islands and the twinkling ports of warships at anchor off Bombay appeared in the distance, a certain Parsee gentleman would not have leaned with half so much assurance on the rail next to us had he known that in the bulging bag almost touching his legs were a dozen live reptiles of the genus cobra de capello, property of Ċhandri Dhass, snake charmer.

CHAPTER XV

Red Elephants and Purple Peacocks

"There were many Elephants, I think fortie, very richly covered with silke, Velvet and Cloth of Golde . . . so they did proceede with a very solemne procession, some with Targets of pure massie gold, with Stremers, Banners, Ensignes, Drummes and Trumpets, with other Musicke, very pleasing to see. . . ."

—Voyages of John Davis, the Navigator (1598)

Jeypore, Vivian had said, was a fascinating place where elephants, monkeys and peacocks paraded up and down the streets unceasingly and the Maharajah lived in a palace of stunning pink. Furthermore, it was the capital of Rajputana and the ancient stronghold of the Rajput princes, a race of conquerors whose armies had once won victory after victory over those of their neighbors who dared oppose them. Vivian had sold me completely, but then, I was a good prospect. Jeypore it was. As the Peshawar Mail puffed out of Bombay I leaned from the window and waved frantically at a pink picture-hat and a white sun-helmet in the shade of the Colaba station platform, until they became smaller and smaller and were finally lost to view.

Coaches on Indian trains are divided into compartments, with a seat running lengthwise on each side and another in the middle. At night these are made up into berths by the passengers, who have to carry their own

bedding, which together with other luggage makes a file of native porters necessary to load and unload. I settled myself in a corner and parked my own scanty belongings under a seat. Through lofty passes in the mountains of trunks and hampers stacked round about I saw now and then the faces of the other occupants. One turned out to be a young Hindu representing a British electrical company in Bombay; another was with a native Mohammedan newspaper in Delhi; and the third, seen only now and then as we rounded a curve, was a young Englishman in government service. I distributed the contents of a fruit basket given me by my Bombay friends and the ice was broken.

The Mohammedan, a swarthily handsome fellow, had toured the United States as advance agent for a Swami who taught stout middle-aged ladies how to vibrate to the ethereal wave lengths, and now took great pride in asking specific questions regarding friends in places he called MaSACHusetts and OhEEo. Then for a solid hour he and the Hindu joined in condemning British rule in India, instancing heinous cases of tyranny and bloody oppression, and calling upon me in loud, clear voices to denounce the iron-shod conquerors of their country to all and singular. The Englishman assumed a bored expression and slid farther and farther down behind his rampart. The tirade went on. I asked the Hindu a very harmless question about the cows I had met on Bombay sidewalks. The travelled Mohammedan sniffed. That was disgusting, was it not? Imagine sacred Presbyterian cows wandering down Broadway and snarling traffic in Times

Square! Largely for that reason we were a progressive people—there were no lazy heifers wandering into department stores and eating up the dry goods. I was trying to imagine a cow going through a revolving door at Wanamaker's when the Hindu climbed upon his seat and began to berate the Mohammedan's ancestors for what they weren't, which was quite a bit, and for what they were, which was a great deal.

"What is your religion?" he shouted at the top of his voice. His arm flailed to the ceiling. "What is it compared to Hinduism? A mud puddle to an ocean—a dung hill to a mountain—a sewer to a——"

"That," shrieked the Mohammedan, "is a lie, a damnable lie and I can prove it. You are a something and the son of a something. Fanatics—all of you—who threw the dead swine on the mosque carpets in Calcutta—who murdered our mullah in Delhi; who——"

"Fool! Pig-headed son-of-a-son-of-a-son-of-a . . ."

I pulled a blanket roll into position as a breastwork and peered carefully over it at the battle, which gradually resolved into just so much static, as the combatants found English ineffectual to express their mutual contempt and fell back upon verbal hand-grenades of explosive Hindi. Through a cranny I looked for the Englishman. His face was red and he was fairly bursting with the desire for a loud laugh, which he was managing to stifle with his handkerchief. After half an hour of more charges and countercharges than in any conflict since the end of the war, the adversaries gasped into incoherence and silence. In fifteen minutes they were conversing amicably on an-

other subject in the best possible humor. Meanwhile, I swore a holy resolve never again to mention cows in mixed company.

When the others made up their beds for the night they observed that I had no blankets and promptly tossed me eight. As the hour grew late the increasing chill made me glad to accept several of them. I drifted off to sleep, lulled by the monotonous clicking of the rails.

Sometime later a voice broke through my slumbers with a series of damns like a row of doors slamming. There was a loud knock at the door of the compartment, mingled with shouts. More lusty tramping and thumping at the door. Someone opened it from the inside, revealing a shadowy shape on the station platform, about which surged like ants many thin, white-clad figures. Into the dark compartment they filed, delightfully heedless of the fact that it was already crammed to bursting, each carrying a box, chest or bundle which he jammed into the first cranny presenting itself. Finally the Shape itself clambered in over the jumbled piles, grunting with solemn dignity, and settled down amongst them like a large and obese eagle on a cushioned crag. I went to sleep again with two small trunks leaning on my chest and some kind of villainous bird squawking three or four strata higher up.

Next morning I pushed the baggage off as best I could and came up to the surface like a submarine commander. Our new arrival was gravely winding interminable lengths of bright orange turban cloth about his head, which was already monstrous.

The Englishman winked and nodded very slightly towards me. "He's a Rajah—a real Rajah. Anyway, he told me so."

The nawab paid no attention, but went on winding. When the flaming head-dress was completed he tucked the end in neatly, flared the edge into a rosette and looked down at us impersonally. The Englishman and the Hindu conversed with him in his own language.

"He has been visiting his royal sister," explained the former. "There ought to be a wild time when we get to Ketah. He tells me the entire army will be necessary to hold back the cheering populace."

As the morning wore on our interest mounted. Surely there never was any place in the world so marvellous as this great state over which our panjandrum held lordly sway. As he told us more and more about it we relapsed into awed silence as our tribute to that divinity which doth hedge a king. At every station three midget lackeys in scarlet livery would present themselves outside the door and inquire deferentially as to their master's wishes, tumbling back into the servant's compartment at the end of the coach when the train started.

About midway through the morning the Rajah began to make preparations to disembark. Knowing the distaste of royalty for the menial tasks of travel, we common persons fell to with a will in his service, assembling his blankets, toilet articles, dinner baskets, caged wild fowl, chairs, folding tables, chests, trunks and minor impedimenta. Grandly, he unwound his fat legs from the squatting position in which he must have slept, donned a pair

of beautiful blue velvet slippers embroidered with gold on their turned-up toes, and made ready for the acclaim of the sea of faces we were sure would presently spread before us, ablaze with patriotism and singing the provincial anthem. Then the train shuddered and stopped before a platform on which stood six natives of odd heights in bare feet, holding ancient percussion-cap rifles at what might jocularly be called present arms. Behind them a brass band of five battered pieces honked dismally. Followed by his retinue, the Rajah inspected the ranks regally and proceeded to the gate, where he climbed, not upon a swaying elephant caparisoned with gold sequins, but—Heaven prevent it—into a rusty Chevrolet! I averted my eyes from the scene. Something timidly trustful inside me was crushed forever.

At Siwainadhopur I had to change for Jeypore. On the platform were, in addition to the usual scores of natives, a tall elderly gentleman of military bearing with an iron-grey moustache and, at a little distance, a very attractive girl who sat on a steamer trunk powdering her nose. Then and there I knew she must be an American.

"Pardon me, but you look like a human being. What is there to drink here and how in the name of Ned does one get it?" She put away her vanity case.

"I haven't the faintest idea. Suppose we ask this gentleman with the walking stick. He looks like a person in authority."

She fanned herself with her white helmet and thought that would be a good idea. We approached him and asked our question. His eyes twinkled.

"Sorry, I don't know either; you see, I'm a stranger here too."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, we thought you were probably a British officer."

"Partially right, but I happen to be a retired American officer."

"Really! That's fortunate. Tell us how the American army would get something to drink in a place like this."

"Well, the Colonel would say 'Attention!' "

My heels clicked.

"Then he would say, 'Soldier, you are detailed to forage for something drinkable. And don't come back until you find it.' "

I saluted, wheeled and was off. After reconnoitering the vicinity I managed to find three bottles of tepid carbonated water that helped to lay the dust. And over its fizziness I met Martha and the Colonel. Martha was from California, and her name gave no indication whatsoever of a radiant personality intent upon satisfying a most amazing love of life and new scenes, both of which she had found as a librarian in Munich and a school teacher in Constantinople. She was now on her way to meet her mother in Shanghai. The Colonel had won his rank in the United States Army. He had taught at West Point and had fought in France, the Philippines and almost everywhere else the flag had gone on warlike missions. Now he was seeing the world in a more peaceful manner and had a first-class compartment from which to do it, in which we were invited to ride as far as we chose. This aided in reducing the cost of rail transpor-

tation across the peninsula, as long as I could elude conductors, which was accomplished by jumping in after the last one had climbed aboard.

That evening we left the train at Jeypore. A clean white station, a tonga, and a ride through the dark violet night to a hotel, where, because of our differing financial ratings, the party split. I went to bed, praying to wake in the morning and see a real red Rajput standing before me. And he did, promptly at 6:30 A. M., with chota hazri, composed of marmalade, toast and tea, held temptingly just above my nose. Already the morning was pleasantly warm. I ate and dressed, all the while saying to myself, "Jeypore, Rajputana, India. Jeypore, Rajputana, Ind—not New York—not Cleveland, but JEYPORE, RAJPUTANA, INDIA!" To be in India and not realize it thoroughly would be bad enough, but to be in Rajputana, and Jeypore to boot and not be fully and completely aware of the fact would be a sin unforgivable.

Crowning a steep eminence a few miles from Jeypore is deserted Amber, city of splendid memories, which, on the Colonel's advice, we decided to attempt. We wandered through the silent court yards and lonely hareems one by one. The throne room of the long dead kings was untenanted and unfurnished. The lavender perfume of dead happiness seemed to diffuse itself where Mirza Rajah had built his Diwan-i-khas to such lavish plans that messengers were sent out from the Emperor Jehangir at Agra to destroy a palace that was more beautiful than his own. But Mirza had forestalled them by plastering his pavilions with stucco, else they would not be there

today. Squarely at the center of the palace, in an open enclosure, an image of the horrid, many-armed Sela Devi leered darkly from under her canopy of gold, and the pavement was red with the sacrificial blood of slaughtered animals, still offered to her.

The Colonel explained to Martha and me the intricacies of the machi-coulis slits along the walls, cunningly devised to greet attackers with boiling pitch. We looked down from little windows just as the ladies of the hareem had done on days when mock battles had been fought there below by the little lake, now reflecting clearly the topmost turrets of the citadel. A lone elephant lobbed along the brink, raising his trunk now and then into an S of gentle remonstrance. We left the hareem, with its walls of reflecting glass segments in odd designs; we descended through the lower buildings and drove in the Colonel's car along the road back to Jeypore, pausing sometimes to allow proud and disdainful parades of peacocks to cross before us. At the city gates the Colonel left us and swept off. Martha adjusted her scarf, settled her topee and prepared for action. I grew curious.

"Where now, O Damsel of the Golden Curls?"

"To the bazaars, sir!"

"Rather would I perish."

"Come along, now, don't be stubborn. I saw some of the loveliest enamelled boxes a little way down. Besides, I need a protector."

Errantry become errandry, indeed! I started to reply tartly but she flashed me a melting glance and I followed, a meek servitor. During the next two hours we rambled

in and out of the tiny shops lining the wide and sunny streets of Jeypore, capital of Rajputana, home of some of the most elegant oriental art to be found anywhere in India. As the hot period passed and the shadows lengthened, the main thoroughfares became a riot of greens, yellows, purples and crimsons in turbans, robes and glittering sandals. Rajput nobles elbowed bullock drivers; peasant women in silver bangles, anklets and nose rings stopped to dally for a moment with fat, complacent merchants arrayed like Solomon in all his glory. Holy men, making tours of all the shrines in India, some of them covering the dusty distances by continual prostrations, extended brass begging bowls to us. Sikhs from the Pathan hill tribes, with black glittering eyes and long beards rolled and tucked back up under their turbans, mingled with servants of nawabs in gorgeous liveries as resplendent as Joseph's coat.

We dodged along through a rolling convoy of the Maharajah's elephants, little bells to port and sta'b'rd jingling merrily and trunks liberally tattooed with fiery pigments out of an opium smoker's dream; we slipped through a fleet of white trotting bullocks, hitched to rumbling carts with solid wheels. We paused to gaze down the long lines of little shops, where a thousand craftsmen were laboring like as many cunning little gnomes in murky caverns.

Martha's progress was a series of minor exclamations and little shrieks of delight at each new beauty revealed. Following her like a faithful squire, I passed successively through all the processes of batik dyeing, pounding out of

brass, copper, gold and silver, fashioning of heavy jewelry, sifting of grains and assorting of foods, embroidering of slippers and turban cloths, tailoring of scant garments, painting of infinitely tiny miniatures and carving of ivory gods.

Above the cheerful din of the smiths, painters, dyers and weavers, numbers of large gray apes clambered and swung themselves over the pinkly frescoed second stories of the shops, many of which were done in exquisite designs and painted with legendary figures. Now and then one of them would approach quite close and watch our bargaining with a seriously interested expression as he hung by his tail.

Martha's manner with the wily vendors moved me to admiration. I had found out previously that gunning in the bazaars absorbs large sections of energy, for fixed prices are as superfluous to the oriental mind as subways in the Sahara. I had learned to enter sword arm first, with an assumed bravado calculated to inspire respect. But compared with hers, my style was amateurish. Late in the afternoon we stumbled upon a slipper bazaar. At first sight of a blue pair trimmed with gold stars and sunbursts I heard her gasp and knew there would be a battle royal. She sauntered in, indicating briefly that she wished to buy nothing, but was simply looking around. The old Mohammedan displayed a buttery smile and wriggled all over with false humility and unctuous solicitude, like an oriental Uriah Heep. His eyes, however, glittered steely lights. Martha moved in an uneven circle of disparagement around the little table whereon reposed

the slippers, picking up articles and putting them down again, criticizing shapes, sizes, warps, woofs, grains and designs, demanding articles he couldn't possibly have and berating him for not having them. She inquired prices haughtily, and evinced a mixture of withering mirth and astonished indignation when he named eight times what he expected to get. After having inspected everything in the place, ruling out each article for apparent flaws, she turned nonchalantly to leave. In passing she glanced at the slippers, picked them up casually, and quickly replaced them with words of belittlement.

Mahomet leered knowingly, pointed to them and said in a whining treble—"*Ex*-cuse me, Memsahib——bootiful vork—feel!——made all by hand—look!——ver' chip—bargain, Memsahib——see!——*Ex*-cuse me, pliz!"

With a frowning condescension she allowed them to be placed in her hands. Then, through an infinite ennui:

"Oh, well, how much?"

The old villain's face became positively beatific. His angelic smile spread like a rosy cloud until his whole benevolent false-face seemed alight in an atmosphere of molasses and soft soap. He smiled seraphically, salaamed thrice, and softly carolled: "Twenty."

"Oh, twenty annas." Her lassitude was swallowed up in a sort of critical interest.

"Oh, no, twenty *rupees*, Memsahib!"

Martha closed her eyes and demanded softly to know whether she had heard aright. It was too much. She assumed the air of a stricken parent in the last act of a three-handkerchief melodrama. Her blanched counte-

nance demonstrated only too well her horror and compassion at such depths of human avarice. Weakly, she turned to leave. We had gone ten paces when Mahomet overtook us.

"How mooch, Memsahib?"

"Never!"

"But Memsahib not see such wonderful work anywhere. Give how mooch? How mooch?"

"Two rupees—and they're not worth it!"

"Two?" Mahomet gave a very convincing impression of an epileptic fit because he chewed betel nut and could froth red at the mouth. To assure that he wouldn't pass out on our hands, I offered three. He came to, strangling and shaking his head.

Now ensued an offensive during which, by dint of great endurance, she battered his price down to seven rupees and he pounded her bid up to five. For the last time she turned away, repeating "Five!" as an Amazon might have voiced her rallying cry. Mahomet was booming out "Seven!" with the regularity of a howitzer. Having marched twenty yards down the street she wheeled sharply on the patiently trailing salesman and pointed one white finger straight at him:

"Six!—six only and ever, and you can take it or leave it!"

Apparently all formalities had been complied with, so Mahomet now accepted the bid, concluded the sale, salaamed and congratulated her on her rare ability.

I mopped a fevered brow.

"Another session like that and you'll have me a nervous wreck!"

"Oh, but I enjoy it. It's rare sport."

"Have you ever been on the stage?"

"Of course not. I'm no actress."

"What, after that? You're a coming Barrymore!"

"Here's a rupee for you. And now here are the city gates and not a tonga in sight. So what shall we do? It's miles to the hotel."

As we stood at the portal the purple curtain of tropical twilight descended over the city and around us, as though some hand had flung it there. A quartered moon hung in the bowl of dusky violet. The road was broad and white.

"Nothing else to do. Let's walk."

"Glorious night! Let's!"

So we swung along through the faint moonlight. When we had sung everything we could remember we began to realize that tramping over a ruined city and shopping through a living one is in India a very good reason for being weary. After we had paused to rest several times the road became very hard indeed.

"My word!" exclaimed the lady, "Isn't there in all this land of spells and wonders a good genie who will bring us something on wheels?"

"Well, here's a white pebble. It won't do any harm to rub it and whisper a request to our protecting jinn, will it?"

"Proceed, but to the genie, not the jinn. They're always alcoholic. What is it?——Abracadabra, Abracadabra, Hocus Pocus Alacazam. Slave of the charm——

listen well! We need a buggy, a surrey, a conveyance. Come across, like a good scout. Send us a tonga, an ekka, an Hispaño-Suiza——anything!"

"Hush! What's that——?"

Shades of Aladdin—hoofs on the road! We saw the dim bulk of a laboring bullock cart barging toward us down the white ribbon. We shouted and ran for it, boarded, and took instant possession of the stern, much to the surprise of the Hindu driver. He blinked, grinned. Sahibs—riding behind bullocks! My one rupee, bestowed lavishly, sent us ahead at the terrific rate of three miles an hour. The cart rumbled on through the night. The curved moon tinctured all the earth with a pearly, luminous gray, until trees and dark grasslands and huddles of native huts seemed alike frail ashes of burnt paper, along the edges of which still glimmered a few little sparks.

CHAPTER XVI

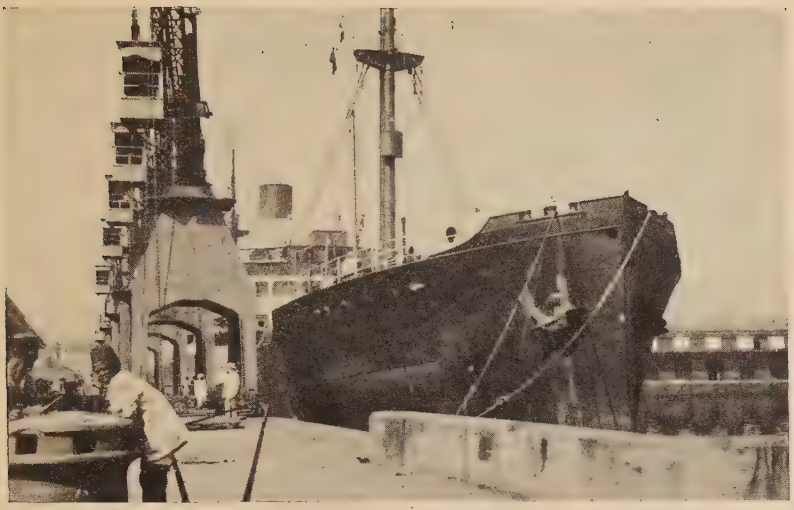
The Tragic Taj

"This Kinge is now buildinge a Sepulchre for his late deceased Queene, Tage Moholl (as much as to say att the brightness of the Pallace) whome he dearely affected. He intends it shall excell all other. . . . She dyed accompanying him in his warrs, as shee did all the tyme of his troubles. . . ."

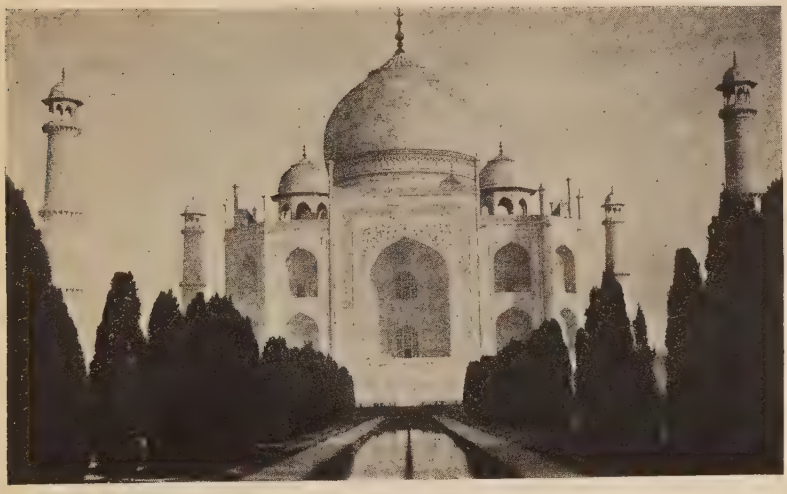
—Travels of Peter Mundy (1632)

Most cities have definite personalities. London is a stout old gentleman with a prodigious ancestry; Paris is a cocotte who wants to marry and settle down; Bombay is a pretty Parsee girl in a rich sari, and Calcutta a Bengali babu in thick spectacles checking a consignment of Lancashire calico. But Delhi! Dynasty has succeeded dynasty—wave after wave of Northern conquerors has broken over her walls—each race in turn has built its capital, run its course under the enervating Indian sun, exhausted its strength and succumbed to new conquest. Her history is strewn over forty-five square miles in ruined forts, towers, tombs, palaces and abandoned cities —the epic of centuries a jumble of scattered masonry. Diversity makes her difficult to epitomize. Life has been too fast here—the pace too furious.

Delhi confused me. I fled the short distance to Agra. That evening my bare little room was lonely. The streets seemed deserted. Only a solitary tonga crept along the



Bombay: the FALKENFELS at the wharf



The Taj Mahal at Agra—"this must be the pleasure dome of Xanadu, conjured up by slaves of the lamp."

A Parsee family at Bombay

Delhi: a son of Mother India answers

roadway. I hailed it and, in an ordinary tone of voice that astonished me, heard myself say "Taj Mahal." Surely this was not I in a tonga bound for the Taj! I clenched both fists and waited for the rude awakening.

But we drew up before a massive arch. I approached it; stopped in the doorway and opened my eyes full.

The long beams of an Indian moon silvered the higher swells of a purple mist; they etched a diminishing double line of tall cypresses like dark vestals in virgin files; they lay like a lover's caress on an argent dome and four slender minarets.

The warm darkness was palpable. An incredible fragrance drifted from the sleeping flowers. This must be a fairy garden from the Arabian Nights, and that the pleasure dome of Xanadu, conjured up by slaves of the lamp.

As I stand by the pool, half-way from the gate, the mists lighten and the white bubble that seemed from a distance like a slender chalice of pearl and ivory soars without warning into the void above. Up from the wide black and white squares of the platform the doorway, delicately screened with pierced marble, rears itself like some Brobdignagian arch over a Gulliver expecting Lilliput. Here is the lacy screen of alabaster that protects the cenotaph of Shah Jahan and his bride, both bestrewn with dying rose petals and palely wan under the hanging lamp. About me in the smooth walls are intertwined the inlaid jewel arbors that will bloom for many a century, mutely declaring an unbelievable splendor.

Shah Jahan, Lord-of-the-World, Flame-of-the-Faith—Shah Jahan, tragic Moghul, why did not your craftsmen

fashion with their cunning tools new words wherewith to describe your masterpiece?

You are a builder—on your record the most magnificent ruler who ever reigned in any land. But the rueful face of your early miniatures—I have seen that, too, and it foreshadows an ill-starred life—marks one aspect of a character which on the rebound evinces itself in lavish processions, gorgeous entertainments, and stupendous buildings. You are known to fickle history as a dealer in superlatives—disciple of the grand manner—pyrotechnician par excellence. As for the rest of your story, no one tells it nowadays . . . why should it be told? The world is full of toil and trouble.

The Taj becomes a ghost, and the long pool is dark. Blood is black when the light fades——

Trains of rude carts rumbling east from Jeypore and Fatephur Sikri, piled with slabs of uncut marble and red sandstone; patient bullocks groaning under massive yokes; a creaking, squealing complaint vibrant in the upper air. On they creep, and from north, east and south others are coming, for the world is harkening to the imperial command. The chief masons hasten from Bagdad, Delhi, Multan—dome builders sway in on their camels from Turkey, from Samarkand and Bokhara; from Shiraz and Kanauj arrive the hawk-beaked Persian mosaic workers and inscribers. Guarded caravans limp wearily in with the dust of the Punjab, of Yunnan and Tibet on their saddle-cloths, and their lading is of crystal and turquoise, of jasper and jade. Lapis and sapphires come from Ceylon, coral and carnelian from Arabia, onyx and ame-

thyst from Persia, and scores of glittering diamonds from Panna in Bundelkund. The materials are ready.

Trumpets now for the great architects—Geronimo Verroneo from Italy—Ustad Isa of Turkey. Taxing every resource of cunning, the masters frame their scheme of beauty. At some empyrean spring the source of which is in another world they find their priceless inspiration; the plans are drawn.

Twenty thousand workmen are forced from their homes; lashed to their tasks, unpaid, starved by dishonest officials who curtail their allowance of food. Twenty thousand laborers slaving here in the pleasance of Jey Singh for seventeen years—some, the artisans, fitting together calyxes of sixty softly shaded carnelian fragments; others straining at huge blocks—sweating, swearing, suffering silently, dying by hundreds. Blood brothers to those nameless ones whose bodies would rise almost as high as the pyramids they built, and to those slave armies of all history whose pitiful backs have borne the wonders of the world—all the colossi, the hanging gardens, the towers and the temples.

What does he think, this mighty Emperor, as he inspects the slowly rising delicacy of the thing he has begun and wonders at it? Here he stands gloomily, a man who has literally waded through slaughter to a peacock throne, on the gem-encrusted glory of which he has lavished the ransom of a dynasty of kings. He has rebelled against his father, murdered his only surviving brother, blinded his nephew and caused three cousins to be strangled. His armies have massacred almost the entire population of

peaceful Golconda and glutted its riches in a war of deliberate conquest. But *he* is building the Taj Mahal!

Years pass—years of declining abilities and lessening power, years of abandonment to enervating pleasures. Then comes grim retribution; poetic justice is done. The hypocritical Aurengzebe casts off his sheep's clothing of religious zeal and takes advantage of his father's infirmities to throw him into prison, seize the throne, and rid himself of brothers, nephews, uncles and aunts.

For seven long years Shah Jahan remains a captive, a tearful and decrepit old man, rubbing smooth the memories of his vanished glories. All his passionate energy is gone, and his moody restlessness is become resignation. He makes no effort to win back his rights and—bitter thought—not a soul arises to do it for him. Then one day they carry him slowly to the octagonal balcony of the Jasmine Tower, where he lies with his tired head pillowed in the arms of his devoted daughter Jahanara—with his eyes fixed upon the miracle he has wrought beside the Jumna, while each little segment of the dazzling crust of mirrors lining the balcony reflects its perfect outlines. And so he dies.

At the gateway before the old caravanserai I pause for a last look. In this structure of gossamer and crystal I sense a personality more subtle than words can ever hope to interpret.

The foundations of the Taj are heartache; its frame is tragedy. And for me its greatest tragedy is that when I returned by day, the magic had vanished, and somehow it seemed tawdry.

CHAPTER XVII

Millions of Gods

"At the ende of the Kingdome of Orixa and the coast of Choramandel beginneth the River Ganges in the Kingdome of Bengalen: this river is holden and accounted of all the Indians to be a holy and a blessed water . . . there is a most great and incredible resorte unto the same, from all parts of India and the East countries in great troupes, where they use divers strange ceremonies and superstitions, most horrible to heare. . . ."

—Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten to the East Indies (1576)

At Cawnpore memories of the Mutiny mingled with the hum of new industry. I absorbed both and stayed over several days after the Colonel and Martha had left, especially to attend a dance arranged by two lovely girls out of an A. A. Milne play who had just come home from school at Simla, and whose parents, it appeared, owned the little hotel. Their cheeks were ruddy; their eyes sparkled; they spoke with the proper accent of Pall Mall. As pretty a pair of British maidens as you could find within a mile of Hyde Park Corner, yet neither of them had ever been to England!

Third-class passage from Cawnpore to Benares began badly with an influx of pilgrims to the holy shrines whose numbers were swollen at every way station until they threatened to burst the seams of the compartment. At

each halt a few more passengers would find new crannies through which to crawl, until the narrow cell was jammed to suffocation. A holy man clad only in a banjo string occupied the seat next to me, with his feet tucked up under him, a brass begging-bowl in his lap, and his head, with its coiled masses of sleek black hair, inclined forward in an attitude of deepest meditation. Now and then he shifted a wad of red betel nut and spat on the floor with a beautiful melancholy. Meanwhile the pilgrims had stowed away their boxes, bags and bales, and several were occupied with taking off their puggarees, which they unwound and draped here and there like festal cheese cloth. I had been in crowded elevators and in rush hour subway trains, but they were never like this; a lower stratum of sitting humanity quite concealed by another of standees, with the whole mass wedged into position by the adroit insertion of dunnage and odd bits of household furniture.

The Sadhu continued to spit reflectively into a dusky gorge thoughtfuly opened for him by the two natives piled nearest; the heat continued with the approach of mid-day to become more stifling. Dust swirled through the windows in white clouds. Then we stopped. I caught a photographic glimpse of a hundred pilgrims charging madly at our compartment. They were forcing the door —they were coming in; half a dozen swung their bundles at the heads of the luckless standees and crawled over their heads, with wild shrieks of triumph. I had enough; I did not pause to wonder how they were going to fit into the puzzle. By a convulsive heave I made my way to the highest level, and with a few vigorous strokes tumbled out

the nearest window. A precise English lady seated on the platform above glared down at me through an eye-glass as though I had just committed treason against the Raj. I grinned back at her foolishly, rose from the cinders, and carefully chose a second class compartment occupied by two Highlanders.

They were officers just down from the Khyber, where they had been engaged in pacifying the Wali of Swat. They spoke of difficulties with two villages in the domain of that potentate, each of which possessed a brass cannon, with but a single cannon ball, which they volleyed courteously back and forth. They bade the guard who demanded my second-class ticket to "run along, mon, he's with us!" and I was troubled no more at all the rest of the way to Benares, which we reached after dark.

I was up early the next morning. The first persons who met my eyes on the sacred streets were none other than Martha and the Colonel! Once more we joined forces, climbed into a tonga, and set out for the Ganges. Martha explained breathlessly that a Swedish prince was to float downstream that very morning, and if we hurried we should undoubtedly be in time to join the royal entourage. The Colonel pooh-poohed this as an insult to his sturdy democratic principles, but there was no reckoning with Martha, who shook her blonde head, patted the boy driver on the back and peremptorily commanded him to head at once for the ghats. Thus it came to pass that at ten o'clock of a bright Indian morning a flat-bottomed dory cast off upon the broad chocolate bosom of the river that washes all sins away, and in it were the Colonel, Martha

and I, while only a few rods farther down the royal party in a two-decker launch sailed slowly along.

Thousands of pilgrims from all parts of India were streaming down the terraced steps to the holy river. Others, their devotions concluded, were climbing to the temples above. Many stood in the water up to their waists, praying. Everywhere were Sadhus under wide mushroom-like umbrellas, selling reliquaries or lost in meditation. Mothers and babies, old and young, rich and poor, mingling, moving up and down and across the ghats until the ebb and flow of color was a tissue of gorgeous hues, like the pigments of an oil film blown to and fro by the wind.

Drops of water glinted as they were flung ecstatically into the air by hundreds of bathers. Some stayed under as long as they could hold a breath, to come up sputtering, radiant and glorified. Saved! The glad certainty hung over the river like a cloud of incense and was reflected in the shining eyes of the newly immersed; reverberated in the throaty booms of temple bells among the curious spires rising like stone artichokes through the milling throngs of inspired humanity. Saved! All eyes, except possibly those of the Yogis, which were intently introspective, shone with freshened happiness. Here was a tapestry of terrific emotional appeal—thousands of human beings were this moment reaching the great climax of their lives—Hindu, Christian, Buddhist or Mohammedan —who could fail to be moved? For almost a mile in either direction up and down the river the ghats were alive with these teeming masses, all facing out across the river to

the bare uninhabited flats on the other side, and seeming, as they stood in the water or sat on the steps with their hands crossed upon their chests in prayer, as though they had come down to the edge of the world and the things man knew about himself to gaze longingly at another, brighter corner of the universe, to which by virtue of this mystic ceremony they hoped some day to escape.

Among the throng, the frail, shrunken body of an old man was being upheld at the edge of the stream, half submerged, while life ebbed slowly away. Garlands of yellow marigold were draped about his neck, and his sunken chest was painted a vivid blue. Eyes in which already dwelt a quiet peace looked up into the hot sky and saw there the joy of salvation. His relatives were deep in prayer. The group was a Rembrandt in the flesh.

Smoke was rising from the Manikarnika Ghat as we floated by this great crematorium of Benares. The body is first laved in the river, then placed on the pyre of wood furnished to the bereaved by Sadhus who thus gain their livelihood. It is enveloped in a new white shroud, decked with flowers, and "ghee" (clarified butter) is poured over all. The nearest relation then lights the pile. Bodies were lying about in their white and red wrappings and others were in all stages of preparation. A pair of feet projected from the end of their fiery couch, and as I watched, one of them burned off, rolled to the edge of the platform, and dropped into the water with a dull *plunk!*

The old man had died. Already his relatives, clad only in dhotis, or loin cloths, were bringing his body to the burning platform for the final rites. Slowly, with

downcast eyes, they bore their burden, and the river water dripped, dripped to the hot stones. I wondered whether that old ghost had, as he fondly hoped, gone on to a higher grade in that long, hard school from which he hoped some day to graduate into non-existence? The sun grew hotter and the wet footprints of his sons vanished before it; a large man with muscles that rippled like steel under mahogany went about the last rites as though he were preparing to burn a bushel of old leaves.

We landed below a tall marble temple within the crowded porch of which sat the God Bhaironath—dread magistrate of the sacred city. His thick body was clothed all in royal blue; he looked down from behind a silver mask like a threatening thunder-cloud. His stout club, held in one hand, was almost hidden by ropes of flowers offered in stay of judgment. Nearby glowered his equally fearsome watchdog. An attendant priest was granting absolution to the throng of pilgrims by light taps with peacock fans. The walls close-packed around, the temple sunken between them like a pearly grotto, and this brooding, sinister power with his dog, his club and his gleaming mask—what sin-stricken genius conceived it? In his way Bhaironath is vastly more effective than the blindfolded lady in the filmy draperies who, with sword and scales, metes out western justice.

After Bhaironath our map proved more of a hindrance than a help, and we wandered from shrine to shrine without its help, through devious, bazaar-lined ravines crowded with devotees hurrying along in all directions, carrying their little brass lotahs, baskets of rice and bril-

liant flowers. They passed us by unseeing, with fixed expressions of rapture. It was all a business-like and utterly serious matter. Many of the house fronts we passed were embellished with pictures of gods, elephants, cows and tableaux from Hindu mythology. I was admiring one of these in the corner of a particularly tortuous street when I turned to find that a large, mild-eyed cow had taken up a position directly in back of me, from which strategic position her soft brown eyes, strangely affectionate below a brace of murderous horns, gazed with wide frankness into mine. In them I sensed a look of innocent merriment. For several minutes I waited. She did not seem inclined to move; on the contrary, she pressed closer, weaving from side to side, slowly chewing her holy cud. What to do? The Colonel and Martha had disappeared. An appreciative little gallery of grinning Hindus was watching. Across the way a vendor of brass gods chuckled covertly. To give this sacred beast an uppercut would spell annihilation. I was on the point of vaulting over her when a priest appeared in flowing white on a low balcony across the street, uttered deep sounds of dark significance, and clapped his hands sharply. Obediently my blockading force did any easy wheel and trotted up a ramp to devotions in the temple. I hurried down the alley, dodging other cows, hurdling their calves, and tacking carefully around all corners.

Rumor has it that there are 333,000,000 gods in Hindu theology—a terrifying prospect for a collector or a Cook's tourist. But they were all there in Benares, every last one. Red elephant gods with silver feet—obscene monkey gods

—nightmare goddesses scowling with red-rimmed eyes from under golden canopies—hideous hordes of gaudy deities whose temples lined the byways in every direction.

I found Martha in the Chauk, bargaining furiously with a brass merchant for a tray, which she proudly presented to me. The Colonel had gone back to his hotel. Over the merchant's very good coffee we studied a map and tried to locate the Golden Temple, the holiest place in Benares, shrine of Visweswara, patron deity of the city. We emptied a final cup and followed the direction of the merchant's gnarled finger into a labyrinth of narrow lanes thronged with the lame, the halt and the blind, in addition to hundreds of the pious from every part of the land, clad for the most part in dhotis only, and carrying the inevitable brass bowls. The way opened—I saw a group of professional mendicants moving slowly through the stream of humanity toward us. They were marching in columns of threes, and as they advanced their lamentations rose in a dirge of age-old complaint. Half a dozen of the crippled and leprous formed the van, dragging their helpless bodies over the stones. Behind them, the heads of the fraternity rose like the ragged back-scales of a dinosaur, and long fingers were outstretched to passersby. They crept by at a snail's pace, "Some in rags, and some in tags, and some in gingham gowns," and were swallowed in the crowds.

Feet, hundreds of them, are splatting along the wet pavement. The air is quivering and vibrant with the hollow vibrations of great bells, rung twice to catch the ears of the gods. All at once we stand beneath the towers

of the Golden Temple, with the plates of frescoed gilt that stab like a flame to heaven. Warm, moist odors of flower-ropes, heavy incense and brown human bodies drift together into a smell that is surely the Emperor of Olfactria. Fifty years later, that astounding combination must recall to one who has known it every voluptuous contour of this little temple—the hideous leers of evil deities that stare suddenly from dark corners like bogies in their wreaths of marigold—the frightful eyes that glare fiercely at worshippers still wet with water from the sacred stream. It will recall the hot, stifling miasma rising from the deep ooze that covers the floor, and the eagerness in the Aryan faces of young and old, pressing through the portals hour after hour.

The sun goes out—the only light comes from where colored flames are burning before idols of painted stone—Siva, Vishnu, Bara Ganesha, the elephant god, and Kali, horrid goddess of pain and blood. A row of priests assemble before the shrine of Visweswara and begin to wave mystic five-rayed lights in hypnotic curves, to the eternal chant—"Sambho! Sambho!" From a background of murmuring sound emerges a haunting chorus, in the slow, measured threnody of a Vedic hymn. As we pass the majestic red figure of the sacred bull, Nandi, now glinting dully as with one hoof raised slightly from his dais he receives the adulation of his devotees, he seems supernatural indeed—almost through the pale of divinity.

CHAPTER XVIII

Where the Map Ends

"After I had left the land of Prester John . . . I came to a certain country which is called Millestorte, a fair and very fertile region. In this country used to dwell the Old Man of the Mountain."

—Travels of Friar Odoric of Friuli (1330)

The round-faced Bhootean who had climbed into our compartment at Siliguri mopped his face and sighed at length.

"I am inspector of this railway," he said, "which is, gentlemen, one hell of a job."

Alf and Bert, the two tommies from Manchester, lit two new Gold Flakes and nodded gravely. I looked out the window and along the track. I could almost touch the ground as the little train crept along, and had an absurd desire to get out and wind up the motor when it labored on an up-grade, which it was doing at increasingly frequent intervals. As we rounded a curve I saw the native on the locomotive fender whose duty it was to throw sand on the line when the going became difficult. The tiny rails wound up through the fever-stricken lower slopes and away into the thick growth of sal and toon trees, the fact that they were only two feet apart making them seem to converge at only a short distance. We crawled along the edge of a sheer precipice, with the sharply ridged hills

above and below covered by curving lines of tea bushes like the whorls on gigantic thumbs. I turned to the inspector.

"Do the trains ever jump the track?"

He smiled nonchalantly. "Oh yes, now and then."

I gazed into the valley two thousand feet below, where the tea pickers were gnats. If we jumped here——! Now the train began to zig-zag and spiral constantly. The inspector rose and pointed out a stretch of track tucked away several hundred feet above.

"That is Gyabari Station," he said. "Very often after a heavy rain the road is carried completely away there. Last year at this time we had fourteen inches in six hours at this point."

He sat down again and looked at his large watch as we scanned the sky for rain clouds. It was noon.

"Would you gentlemen have any objection if I pray?" He asked it in the tone of a man requesting permission to smoke.

"Oh, none at all, go right ahead, don't mind us!" we chorused. I looked at Bert and Alf, and Bert and Alf looked at me, and I think it was the consensus of opinion that a few prayers would not particularly harm any of us. Especially since at this time the line began to do a series of backward flips and outside loops on tracks built like a circular staircase, so that a number of bridges carried us again and again around and over the wee shining rails just traversed, while the engineer had a confidential chat of some length with the occupants of the last car.

The inspector was at it industriously now. He had

removed his hat to reveal his shaven pate to the light of day. His hands he held at waist level, palms up and one above the other in the Buddhist attitude of prayer, while he mumbled and muttered to himself of many strange things. As the worst of the bucking ceased he signed off sharply and put on his hat again, seemingly much refreshed.

Around us now we saw some of the most breath-catching scenery in the world. Behind, outspread like a great fan and all dreamy green through the moist air were the plains of India, across which wandered rivers sparkling like diamond brooches under the sun of noonday. Before, the sylvan hills, rising higher and higher, and beyond them the serrated peak of Kinchenjunga, second highest point on the globe, stood like a lonely white sentinel on the roof of the world. Across the wide valley to the west the mountains of Nepal and the frontier fort of Elam, held by Nepalese troops, were clearly visible.

Here Alf in great enthusiasm produced a tiny camera and began to snap the receding plains, the tea bushes, the squat Bhootean houses, peaks seventy miles away and wayside tombs at fifteen feet with reckless abandon. He had just taken a prospect of Ghoom station, now vanishing behind us, when suddenly the toy train swept around a close curve and the whole glorious panorama of the eternal snows burst upon us with a cool breath like a cosmic theater-setting, revealed by the drawing of a stupendous curtain. Alf's camera clicked like a typewriter. He was leaning out the window to take an epic sweep of sky and range when there was a jarring shock, the car

Burning ghat—"the body is first laved in the river, then placed on the pyre of wood furnished to the bereaved."

Delhi Fort: the pearl mosque

"The serrated peak of Kinchenjunga stood like a lonely white sentinel on the roof of the world."

Kinchenjunga from Jongri—"some of the most breath-catching scenery in the world."

careened sharply, and Alf dove headlong from our midst. He rolled over once and sat up, rubbing his head with one hand and holding the tiny box on high triumphantly with the other as the train jolted to a stop.

The engineer descended from the cab with one short step and unlimbered a long crow-bar hung alongside. Luckily the ledge had been fairly wide where the last two cars had left the line. With a little pushing and prying we had them back on, and the run down the grade into Darjeeling was soon completed.

Almost before I knew it a coolie had my pack. He was so obliging I let him keep it and gave him the address of the family with whom I intended to stay. We started up the hillside from the station along winding paths, sometimes so steep they were cut into steps. Noticing that the rarefied air of 7,000 feet and the steepness of the slope had me panting, the coolie loosened the pack strap on his head, grinned, and motioned for me to rest. Something about his face and figure caused me to look again. *He* was a girl! As she swung the pack to her head again and started off ahead of me tirelessly, I was suddenly glad that I was quite unknown in Darjeeling. Draw a curtain over the shameful scene. It is enough to say that the feminist porter smilingly handed over my pack when we reached the destination and seemed quite astounded to receive all of eight annas (sixteen cents) for the service. In Darjeeling a strapping Bhootean girl will carry a piano farther for less; has, in fact, actually done it!

Just after sunrise next morning I looked out of my window. Framed in it was Kinchenjunga, reared in

majesty like a mighty overlord, wearing a glittering crown that stabbed white sparkles into the high air. Here were mountains to struggle with! No carefully pruned and shaven Alps, up which guides are paid to pull the rheumatic tourist, but great male ranges where no human foot had ever trod! In my wilder moments I dreamed of assaulting Everest single-handed, and the fancy was fanned by tales afloat about the town of dire vengeance awaiting whomsoever might attempt the highest peaks, coupled with stories of ambushes and of strange avalanches with no apparent cause. While I had no real hope of more than clambering about their little-known bases, that alone was alluring.

I made the conventional trip to Tiger Hill, above Darjeeling. At the magical moment of sunrise Everest is supposed to gleam like the ghost of some far monarch on the horizon; then, as the light grows stronger, she fades away from the eyes of men. I glimpsed but a brief suggestion through the early mists—a tantalizing chimera in the far distance. The assembled tourists enthused, that being their function, but somehow I was disappointed.

Descending slowly from Observatory Hill towards the Darjeeling Mall, I paused to gaze for soul-stirring miles across a crumpled world. I saw tier on tier of gigantic, thickly wooded ridges rising across the little land of Sikkim into the regal haze enshrouding the lower reaches of this white top of the earth. Steeply slashed between these lower ranges, rising higher than many of the Alps, terrific chasms yawned seven and eight thousand feet deep, in which roaring torrents leapt through masses of

steaming tropic vegetation. Where I stood, more than a mile above, a mild sunshine served to dispel the chill of early morning.

The crystalline air was tonic; it urged me to high deeds. On the instant I resolved to plunge into this land of mystery—to meet these mightiest of mountains on their own ground. I hurried down to the Mall and began to make inquiries. I was told that travel in Sikkim, despite a number of new trails, was still full of difficulties and hardships. Frequently there was no shelter from the arctic cold of the heights and the stifling heat of the river bottoms. The Lepchas and other jungle dwellers were poor and often had only enough provisions for themselves. Furthermore, taking ponies into certain areas of northern Sikkim was impossible; everything had to be carried in rucksacks. I drank tea with a fat-faced Bhootean who sold leopard and tiger skins. From him I elicited the information that Faloot, in the Singalela range to the west, offered the best opportunity for observing Everest at closer hand. Whereupon one Langsam, placid Buddist and intrepid mountaineer, who was opening up a bale of hides, promptly stepped forward and offered to do the honors for one rupee a day (36 cents). Even I could hire a guide at that rate! Besides, Langsam looked like a jovial soul and as souvenirs of his long experience on the caravan route from Darjeeling into Tibet, he wore gold ear-pendants like small trapezes and a big thumb ring of jade.

The way to Faloot lies along the great outer watershed of the Himalayas, upon a northerly spur of which Darjeel-

ing itself dizzily overhangs the rushing waters of the Teesta river in its gorge 6,000 feet below. This watershed runs westward from Darjeeling, curves like a scimitar to the north along the very border of forbidden Nepal, and terminates with a flourish in several moderately high peaks. It all sounded very interesting, and certainly not to be missed because of a little difficulty. So we filled our rucksacks, Sam and I (his name having been shortened for convenience), and rose early one chilly morning to hit the trail. I had dressed warmly, having been warned that the nights would be intensely cold on the higher elevations. Shouldering my pack, I waited patiently for Sam, who presently appeared, with a swollen zone around his equator that made me wonder if he used a python for a belt. As it turned out, the bulge in his long purple gown marked the cache of an extraordinary quantity of commissary supplies, not to speak of his prayer wheel, pipe and rosary. A large kukri, or hill knife, was thrust into his red sash, and a little blue cradle-shaped hat poised at a rakish angle over one ear. Blunt, thick-soled Chinese shoes and a short pigtail completed his costume. Such a bodyguard, thought I, might Marco Polo have chosen for his long journey across the deserts to Cambaluc and the court of the Great Khan!

The bazaars were almost empty as we passed through, except for a hillman sitting on a box and plaiting his long black hair, and, at a short distance, several women unloading coal from diminutive railway gondolas into hampers strapped on their backs. The road to Ghoom was a burnt orange streak in the frosty light. Prayer flags fluttered

over the terraced roof-tops of Darjeeling like pennons of ochre; behind us the jagged majesty of Kinchenjunga and Janoo flamed in a dawn-lit sky. Day was breaking in imperial splendor on the top of the world.

Never a look did Sam bestow upon the spectacle as he trudged along, whirling his prayer wheel and muttering variations on the eternal theme: "Om Mani Padme Hum—" (Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus!) Now and then as he lifted his head in a reverent eyes-left at peasant prayer wheels running steadily by water power and long festoons of vari-colored pennants strung over rushing torrents and dangerous places in the road, the sun caught his round, impassive face and reflected it a lovely hue of delicate apricot.

As we trudged onward he thrust the prayer wheel into his mysterious hold-all. Soon he went so far as to venture several attempts at conversation, with much manual effort accompanying the frequent repetition of the few English words he knew. By nine he had become almost gay, and I was glad I had cast my lot with him. A companion, even though he discoursed chiefly in Bhootean, was a treat after months of solitary vagabondage.

All the first day Sam and I made the best of our way along the southern ridge. We were in a dream wood of massive sisoo and toon trees, sals with broad red leaves and junipers growing to prodigious heights and arching and criss-crossing overhead. Their soaring trunks were banked about with riotous growths of tree ferns swathed in luxuriant vines and creepers, and the whole primeval growth was made a soft and unearthly gray by eddying

mists that caused every frond and leaf to glisten and drip diamonds of moisture all day long. We made about fourteen miles before camping for the night in the midst of a dense forest. As evening drew nigh the fairy cloak lifted and our fire showed the outlines of the interwoven trees, rough and starkly black, pressing down upon us for all the world like fantastic pictures out of Hansel and Gretel. The gnarled and crooked old giants, with their thick rooty bases, surely hid trolls, dryads and warlocks!

We dropped off to sleep, despite the weird keening of night birds and the monotonous plaint of unseen tree frogs, and dawn saw us once more on the trail through the bewitched wold. About noon the immense trees thinned and we reached a Bhootean village where a number of fat, red-cheeked babies toddled out to greet us. We ate juicy pineapples and drank a sort of mild wine Sam had found somewhere, completely surrounded by a politely interested crowd of citizens, who kept offering us native dainties until both of us were near to bursting.

All afternoon we climbed steadily, the magnificence of the view increasing with every step, and that night we bivouacked atop Tongloo on a rolling plateau at 10,000 feet, with a hint of what was to come in the prospect revealed by a pinkish sunset. Next day we plunged along the ridge again through the mist-hung forest to Sandakphu, 11,929 feet. Long before dawn on the day following we were up for the final dash to Faloot, some twelve miles of hard travel over uneven terrain and numerous narrow ravines, in order to see the splendor of the sunset over Everest. I was weary, footsore and spent when we finally

dragged our toilsome way from rock to rock up the conical peak, breathing hard, and threw ourselves down to rest, feeling more dead than alive.

Alas for my hopes! The whole world around and below us was a rolling ocean of gray, not without its beauties, but completely obscuring everything more than a hundred yards away. We sat in disconsolate isolation on the rocky crest, munching dry biscuits and eating tinned meat, while Sam thoughtfully produced his prayer wheel and said several hundred orisons for the dissolution of the foggy vastness. All to no avail; darkness came, and with it a biting cold closed in about us in the rest house, marooned like shipwrecked mariners on a nebulous sea, and clinging precariously to a dizzy pinnacle of the earth's ceiling.

I drowsed fitfully, waking often to a realization of the bitter wind that pierced me to the marrow. Toward morning I slept. Then a light entered between the folds of my blanket. I blinked and snuggled back as the chill trickled into my blood and seized my nose with icy fingers. Peering sleepily at where Sam should have been, I saw only his rumpled pallet. Then I remembered—summit of Faloot! With a bound I sprang to my feet—caught my breath sharply; for one supreme moment I was a god!

Around me swept the most stirring panorama in all the world. At one thrilling glance I saw three of the earth's four highest mountains, glittering and glinting in the resplendent ermine of conscious majesty. Running far toward the Tibetan uplands, more than sixty-five peaks never yet humbled by the foot of man uprose,

circling in a proud and lordly company to meet the first orange rays of the sun. My eyes wandered in exulting wonderment over the gargantuan sides of Kinchenjunga; dropped to the fluffy down of the cloud carpet in the valleys far below; caught the sparkle of a glacial point on Makalu; leapt from crag to crag and paused—held by the veriest peak of Everest, twenty-nine thousand feet of snow-capped sovereignty—monarch and liege lord of them all!

The earliest rays were painting the glittering diadem upon her head with a splendid band of glowing orange. Below, the robe about her and her two attendants faded away into royal purple, edged with the blackness of velvet at the foot. Sam was on his knees to his goddess Chomo-Lunga, Mother of the Mountain Snows. I caught her name between long passages of jargon as his prayer wheel turned with ever-increasing zeal. Then he fell silent. As I stood on this frosty foot-stool, which must be one of the finest vantage-points on earth for observing its greatest peaks, the sun rose higher and higher and the tints drained from the snow caps, leaving them a virgin white. Utter quietude lay over the face of a stupendous world.

I took in the spectacle for more than an hour. Always in their wanderings my amazed eyes were drawn back to the bulk of the Everest group. The massive conformations of a peak just to the right seemed to outline a titanic Jovian throne; another to the left—the Everest center peak—rose like a warder in white armor. With Langsam, I revered the God who built such a range. And I thought of the intrepid Mallory and Irvine, gallant Englishmen

who dared the terrible power of the goddess-mother and who never returned—who even now were sleeping on those taunting scarps—under those alluring crags, perhaps very near their goal. A needless sacrifice? Perhaps. And yet what a dazzling challenge! The goddess lured me as she had drawn those whom she had sacrificed. I realized how she crept into men's lives like a potent drug and paralyzed all ambitions but those which would entice them back to death on her high altar. I felt in bondage to her; I, too, highly petitioned that if the fates so willed, I might come back some day to try this unconquered crest, this supernal summit!

That afternoon we slid eight thousand feet into the valley of the Kulhait river. The air became warmer and thicker; our bodies were bathed in perspiration as we passed successively through alpine, temperate, subtropical and tropical zones into the rank twilit lushness of the steaming river bottom. Palms and tree ferns twenty feet high formed a network and made the going difficult. Vines and swinging airplants hooked my cap from my head time and again, while elephant creepers swung from the bamboo and kapok trees and giant pothos with shining leaves as big as platters reared into an over-arching roof. I could hear the thunder of the river above all other sounds, like an invisible presence ready at any moment to tear away the very earth on which we trod. Sam plied his razor-sharp kukri diligently, and we stumbled along narrow green corridors through the suffocating moisture, tearing the undergrowth apart, until at last we straggled wearily into a little Lepcha village. The few bamboo

houses were of mean construction, forced as they were to combat an insidious and rapid tropical rot, and some of them leaned at drunken angles.

We were met by the headman and invited to climb a tree trunk into which steps had been cut and bestow ourselves upon the floor of his house. There was a blaze in a rough stone fire-place, about which a woman in a white robe busied herself with the preparation of a pasty mess which she served presently in shallow trenchers of split bamboo. She was so smilingly confident that I was going to eat it that I couldn't disappoint her. Summoning every ambrosial thought I could collect, I gulped it down. There was a peculiarly dank and evil odor about the place; I wondered at first if it could be owing to something in the food, but a little investigation showed that it was because the livestock were kept under the floor. No wonder devil charms dangled from the rafters.

After a meal made up chiefly of sour paste and a large dish of tough, bitter greens, from which everyone scooped what he desired, we rolled up on the rough floor in double-utility hill-blankets which had been loaned to us and went fast asleep. Next morning I had an opportunity to examine the village. Compared with the sturdy habitations of the Bhooteans and the Nepalese settlers in the higher zones, the framework of the houses seemed flimsy enough. Yet there was about them that same atmosphere of lazy enjoyment and good humor that characterizes the Lepcha race itself. Even if total destruction impended, they would face it gracefully.

Next morning the worthy headman escorted us to the

corporation limits, drank with us a final cup of tea, gave us several oranges wrapped in a leaf and smiled toothlessly after us as we started away from his pleasant mountain domain. We clove our way through the leopard-infested thickets, passing now and then through little glades where the sunlight lay on jumbled banks of orchids —yellow, white, mauve and olive-green, overhung by the passionate flame of scarlet hibiscus, glowing like lanterns behind the long streamers of dripping moss, through all of which the bougainvilleas twined in red and purple glory far up into the dark branches. Against this exotic color floated through the perfumed air big butterflies splashed with brilliant hues from the heart of the rainbow.

We crossed the river by a recently built cane bridge. No words can do entire justice to the cane bridges of Sikkim. Lashed hastily together and composed of a narrow bamboo foot walk and two hand rails held apart by a series of yard-arms slung underneath, they do not reveal their skittishness until one is partly across. Then, with a roaring torrent underneath creating the visual illusion of being whisked rapidly upstream, they begin snaky contortions that would frighten a wire-walker. A horizontal motion sets in; simultaneously a sinuous vertical wave begins to run back and forth like a loop along a lariat. Where the two impulses meet there is a moment of dreadful uncertainty. One is convinced that the fate of the five travelers who tried to cross another bridge at Lima will be as nothing to the horrible plunge that awaits. No quarter-deck ever heaved so strangely; no bronco ever bucked so wildly, as a cane bridge at the height of a

demonstration. When the farther shore is finally reached there is a moment of solemn decision, while the globules of clamminess are wiped away, when it is highly resolved never to cross another such bridge, even if one is marooned forever. But that passes.

On the mountain-sides stone chortens now began to appear frequently. These are monuments resembling teapots erected on sacred sites throughout Sikkim, which, judging by the number of revolutions bestowed on them by Sam's prayer wheel, must have been very holy shrines indeed. Occasionally we came to prayer walls, which we were careful to pass on the right in order to appease the myriad demons of Buddhist lamaism. Towards nightfall Sam produced his wheel for the umpteenth time and began his devotions on the march. As we turned up a wooded spur and began the ascent of a steep and stony trail, I heard a rolling, rumbling sound vibrant on the upper air—a muffled roar gradually increasing in volume as we climbed. Sam motioned with his head for the final spurt.

"Gompa," he said. "Sanga Chelling."

Sanga Chelling—"The Place of Mystic Spells!" I wiped the perspiration from my face and looked up. Silhouetted against a violet sky I saw the bare-walled monastery, and the head lama standing at the forefront of a welcoming committee with his hands clasped and a beatific smile on his face. After much smiling and bowing, we entered the holy precincts and I saw the "ra-dong" we had heard—a deep-voiced conch found at every monastery, usually blown to welcome visitors.

Before the sun slipped under, Sam indicated from a nearby promontory others of the many monasteries crowning the billowy green hills. Not far away was Pemiongchi, "The Sublime Perfect Lotus," largest in Sikkim, while topping other eminences I could see Tassiding, "The Supreme Central Glory" and Sennen, "The Suppressor of Intense Fear."

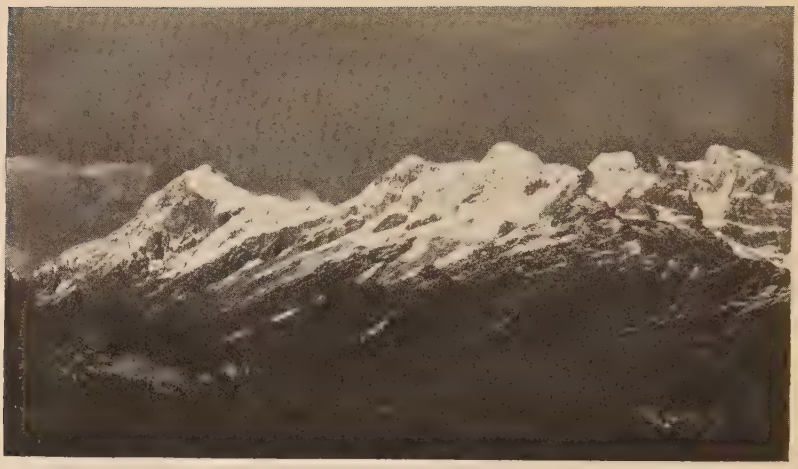
That evening, by the dim light of lines of little oil lamps we attended the ceremonies in the chapel. The monks sat in parallel rows in their brilliant red and yellow robes, chanting long sonorous prayers that rose in tempo until they were like a swirling torrent in the gorges far below; then fell almost to a whisper. With a wild tumult of sound the sacred music broke forth—clanging of brass, a blare of horns and a thunderous symphony of drums, accompanied by the droning of the conch.

The proceedings surged along, rippling here, breaking into shattering rapids there, as the lamps burned low and guttered in their holders and the glints faded from the golden Buddhas on their dais at the end of the chamber. The Um-tze conducted us through a smaller room off the main chamber which led to our quarters. Several of the good brothers were still industriously rotating a number of perfectly huge prayer wheels as large as hogsheads, decorated all over with frescoes and exhortations in eloquently colored characters. Om Mani Padme Hum! One of the old men stopped long enough to show me the works of his barrel. These consisted solely of an axis and several thousand pounds of coarse paper with the magic formula written closely again and again. As each revolution is ex-

pected to register every prayer inside the cylinder once to the heavenly credit of him who revolves, the total daily output must run well into twenty-five figures. I found turning quite easy, but paused after entering a few trillions on the golden scroll, fairly certain of a reservation as at least an archangel. Why be grasping?

I sank to the kindly pallet that evening with as much gratitude as though it had been of scented eider-down and rosebuds. The window was an intense rectangle of glittering constellations and the cell was full of cool, clean night air. A wave of sensuous delight flowed beneath the even current of approaching sleep. My thoughts rambled drowsily back down the long trail my feet had trod—it was mid-day back home—somewhere a matter-of-fact world was worrying over its affairs, and here was I, falling, falling, falling into bottomless pits of cotton-wool in Sanga Chelling—dropping into dreamless slumber in the Place of Mystic Spells.

Sunrise from the Singalese Spur



Pandeem and Jubonoo

Shanghai: what the DAILY NEWS said

CHAPTER XIX

On the Up and Up

"For at one of the parties, there is so gret cold, that no man may dwelle there: and in another partie, there is so gret hete, that no man may endure it. And toward the hede benethe in that Roialme, is the mount Chotaz, that is the hiest mount of the world. . . ."

—The Voiage and Travailes of Sir John Maundeville, Kt. (1322)

Next morning, after partaking of several sour barley cakes and a bowl of buttered Tibetan tea, Sam and I sat down in the shadow of an ancient chorten and I drew out a map of Sikkim. My eyes ran up and down the deep river valleys. The names of the mountains, the glaciers, the passes—Pandeem, Kabru, Talung, Kinchenjunga, Siniolchu—they were a symphony played by locomotives and cathedral bells—the syllables tasted of the wild, free out-of-doors—I knew that I must go to them.

North! We must go north towards Tibet, the mysterious mantel-piece of the planet—to those wide, bare spaces studded with delightful question marks. I saw that as the topographer had gone farther and farther his drawing had mazed increasingly into masses of thick black convolutions. Peaks almost as high as three Matterhorns were indicated here by this proper Briton with letters and numbers, as though these unscaled and seldom-approached Himalayas had been thoroughly cross-indexed

and filed end to end by the omniscient officials of New Delhi. As my fingers ran up the ridges and across the glaciers I had that strange inward quiver that tingles within those accustomed to going to and fro over a trodden earth, when on the threshold of the unknown. Was it worth coming over ten thousand miles to stand where perhaps no white man had ever stood before? A thousand times, yes! I hurled the answer up the valleys that wound away above to the snows.

We thanked the abbot for his hospitality, deposited a stone on the ceremonial cairn for good luck, gathered our packs, and with the shrill medley of fifes, shell trumpets, trombones, cymbals and drums like corn poppers bidding us fond adieu, we made for the valley of the Rathong river, not more than two miles away and below. It was a sheer and difficult descent, aided often by slippery bamboo ladders placed against the sides of the cliffs. The map had little significance for Sam. When I paused to get my bearings he would turn it round and round, only to smile and shake his head uncomprehendingly. But the mention of a name—ah!—that evoked instant response. He would point at once in the correct direction, and draw crude diagrams of his own in the air, whereupon I would cross my fingers and follow him.

We forded several small, deeply cut streams, passed the euphonious little hamlet of Ting Ling, and ploughed through an almost solid wall of bamboo thicket to the river bed. On the other side were a number of very old houses, several of them tumbled in, and a little removed, the ancient monastery of Dubde, the most venerable in

Sikkim, together with several of the biggest "mani" water wheels I had yet encountered. The monks of Dubde seemed as old as their monastery—as prehistoric as the great wheel of life painted on the wall inside. We bivouacked in one of the old ruins and were up bright and early. From here onwards the trail was narrow and uneven, and the scenery for the next day or so became increasingly wild as thick underbrush and thorn trees clawed at us and almost swallowed the faint path. Mists eddied from the trees and long gray streamers flaunted from their tops. Clammy moisture gathered on my forehead and my heavy clothing clung as stickily as a wet bathing suit. The deeper we dove into the valley the thicker became the fog, until keeping to the trail became an intuitive process. Two days from Dubde we reached the fork of the Rathong and paused before starting up the steep wooded wedge formed by its junction with the Praig. Sam motioned a rest. This proved a wise precaution, for the climb turned out to be the most fatiguing we had yet attempted, our blanket rolls, packs and heavy coats greatly impeding our progress. In its lower reaches this incline was a swampy inferno of steaming black slime, deceptively hidden by masses of lush vegetation, all covered with leeches and stinging insects. The air was stifling. The intertwined foliage shrouding the jungle giants that rose in stockades all about or lay where some torrential storm had felled them, cut off any faint breeze that might have been stirring. When we paused to rest, my own hard breathing whistled through the heavy silence and sounded mockingly in my ears. But it was

beautiful—what with the lianas swinging across green-screened, smoky sunbeams that bored their way far into the tumbled luxuriance below—the jagged rocks that began to rear themselves in odd, tortured semblances of overgrown fortresses and becalmed ships—it was beautiful and it was deadly. We were covered with hot, black muck to the knees; with every step our packs weighed more and more and some kind of sting, whether from plant or insect, had raised red welts on our hands. Would we ever get through this jungle, this morass, this infernal, airless hell of swarming life that tore at our flesh and laughed at our puny efforts to conquer its dominion?

It seemed endless; obstacles were surmounted only to give place to others—thickets to hack through; trees to crawl over whose boles loomed like ramparts; sharp, rocky projections around which a passage must be found. We wound almost to the top of one of these that blocked a small ravine. Through it flowed a shallow stream, cold as ice, here leaping over the rock in a thin waterfall. I reached for a purchase with a rude alpenstock I had manufactured from a fallen bough; it slipped on the wet stone, I clutched wildly at the face of the rock, and fell in an avalanche of fragments from one jutting outcrop to another quite to the bottom of the slope. I lay in a huddle, breath gone, a dull pain coursing like deep fire through my right leg and resolution almost shattered. For a moment I was conscious of only an abysmal despair. Then I rolled over and propped myself up on one elbow. I could hear Sam's voice from above—faint and far. A trickle of blood oozed away from a scratch on the back of my outstretched

hand and mingled with the clear waters of the stream. I felt as though I had just been kicked out of a Turkish bath.

Despair gave way to a blind rage; I wanted to beat the cliff with my staff until it crumbled into dust—to smash the towering, gloomy jungle into matchwood—to burn each individual insect of the stinging tribes in a holocaust of roaring flames. Sam was shouting down well-meant advice. Heedlessly I sprang to my feet, limped to the face of the rock and started up again. Were we trapped in this suffocating wilderness? I tore at the footholds with the desperation of the last ounce of strength above exhaustion—I sliced at the prominences as though they had been the heads of a defending garrison and shouted impatiently at Sam when he tried to help me up; this was a solitary combat. Only a few feet more—a few feet—black spots danced on the quivering solitude, war drums thumped in my ears, and each gasp filled laboring lungs with red heat . . . I crawled over the top and collapsed.

Sam was sympathetic, laving my face with clear, cold water from the rivulet. The pain in my leg seemed to be caused by nothing more serious than a wrenched tendon, and after a little massage we started off again, in order to get out of the forest before nightfall, any weakness being overcome by the prospect of having to camp in this nightmare wood. The going became much easier. Soon we had passed the thickest of the lower woodlands and the last of the rhododendrons, and attained to a wild, bare summit revealing prospects of clear and unwooded, though still extremely rough country. Here was the end

of the hot, dense, jungled lowlands. As I sank to a broad rock, unlimbered my pack, and looked now down into the converging valleys, now at the peaks, so thrillingly near, the realities of Sikkim smote me as never before. I was breathing hard—every fiber drinking rich, red nourishment—I was bathed in perspiration under my heavy coat —I had given to the earth; now received from it a keen sense of its splendid significance.

I felt as primitive as a Neanderthal man, sitting there on my rock, my kingdom, in the midst of the primeval cosmos. There were the snowy peaks—the backbone from which radiated all the taut sinews of the world. Below—far, far below, in those noisy valleys and ravines, now become anchorages for white cloud-cruisers drifting up slowly to dispersion, the elements raged and fought as they had done when the world was young. There, among the magnolias, the mahogany trees, and the dripping mosses, foaming cataracts thundered and sparkled, framed in dark veils of lacy ferns. There the primal forces strove amain in a battle-smoke of torn and vaporous haze; life was born, flickered into white heat, and died, while up from the war of fire and water, up from the green domes and temples of the jungles swelled the billowy hills and above these the last tidal waves, poised in icy indifference to the turmoil below, as though a sorcerer had frozen them there that they might not drown the world.

When breath and energy had returned, we pressed forward from this division line to a yak-grazing station composed of only a few rough huts built with the slabs of thick stone, outcrops of which were to be seen on every

hand. Here we stayed the night, and a chilly night it was. At dawn we wound into the wide upper valley of the Praig river. On either side rose high cliffs and above them the icy peaks, into whose realm we were gradually entering. Their frosty heights chilled the cold air still further as we pulled our collars about our ears and continued through vegetation that had dwarfed to a reddish scrub, with now and then a copse of silver firs. That night we camped at another open yak station, using for the second time a small shelter tent we had acquired at Sanga Chelling, composed of two large, thick hill-blankets in a fetching hue of orange.

We were now almost at the head of the valley; after a night of piercing cold the clear dawn showed us, not far ahead, the huge moraine formed by the junction of the Pandeem and Kabru glaciers. As we neared this it proved to be a desolate mass of torn and splintered debris—contorted rocks and sharp-edged rubble littering the place like the wastage left from the making of the mountains. This surmounted, a wide glacier spread before us, lined with irregular crevasses, pitted, and ground here and there into towers of ice blocks sparkling prismatic rays. Other glaciers of various sizes and shapes studded the surrounding slopes, most of them feeding into the two larger ones. Concave depressions at intervals marked the beds of lakes now dry. At the head of the valley steep cliffs closed in about an open space on the very edge of the biggest glacier of all, above which the Guicha Pass rose almost directly overhead to 16,240 feet.

Terrific—was that the word for what now rose about

us? No—something stronger, some word—words, shouting processions of them—some strange, wild sound was needed, into the notes of which could be compressed all the terror and confusion of broken earth and yawning glacial chasms; all the awesome and supernatural glitter of the peaks; all the quick shock, the faintness, the tingling exaltation that the sight aroused.

The day passed like a dream, and on the next morning we set out to get the view from the summit of the pass. We had progressed only a short distance, however, when a snowstorm blew across from the west. The suddenness of its appearance had been such that almost before I knew it Sam was lost to view in the swirling flakes. The only direction of which I was conscious was down. Above, all the demons of the blizzard were dancing. With every step I slid a yard on the hard crust, now newly carpeted. There was a moment of irresolution. I shouted into the teeth of the howling wind, and receiving no reply, leaped downward as fast as I could run, glissading at such a terrifying rate that I had to close my eyes against the driven snow and trust to luck that I had clear sailing. A few seconds of this express train speed, and I brought up on the floor of the valley in a breathless heap. Fifteen minutes later I found Sam, just as the sun broke provokingly above the Guicha. In sheltered places, out of range of the bitter wind, the heat now became unbelievable, reflecting up from the ice in the middle of the day in fierce, feverish waves. We wavered between oven and ice-box. Sunstroke on these frigid heights being by no means impossible, we kept in the shade when we could manage it.

On our right began a lofty mountain-range, of which the two highest points were roughly indicated by the map as Kabui Kang and Ting Ching Kang. Kabru to the west, Pandeem to the east and Kinchenjunga to the north, together with a host of smaller summits, completed a panorama whose equal for sheer magnificence would be hard to imagine.

Once on an unnamed mountain towards Nepal a snowfield as wide as a city broke away near the crest and slid like a toboggan to the surface of a glacier below with a soft, silky swish, bursting as it impacted into an aurora of rainbows. But mostly the aspect was grand—immovable—lacking in any indication of life or transiency. How like a cell of simple protoplasm one feels in the presence of such eternal verities as these—how shorn of his conceits and his vanities, of his prejudices and his prides! Worries sink out of sight before the unimportance of the human atom in the mighty plan. Lofty mountains are a soothing philosophy; they should be the retreat of all those whose perspectives have warped.

Regretfully, despite the cold, I turned from the riven glaciers and the moraine wreckage of this upper valley. It was like leaving the Valhalla of the mountain gods. It seemed almost lèse majesté to turn our backs upon the Presences at the end of the audience chamber, and I kept feeling that some catastrophe would overwhelm us from a clear sky. But the retreat was effected, we remained unscathed and bade the valley goodbye, to take another rough and uneven trail to the west. The path wormed across a river valley formed by a noisy torrent, and along

the northern bank of the Rathong, which presently it crossed. Here was an idyllic spot—a clearing known on the map as Gamothang, fringed with dark green pines, silver fir and willows. These skirted the peaks that rose sheer on all sides to the snowy heights. Cascade ribbons hung from the cliffs like bridal trains, and the Rathong dashing over its pebbly bed filled day and night with a strange, insistent music.

Next morning I noted with some uneasiness that our provisions had become dangerously low—some corn, a few hard biscuits and a little tinned meat being all we could produce. As the nearest habitations were still at some distance we went on half rations.

I was trying to wash my hands in a pool of bitterly cold water over which a crust of ice had formed during the night, when I heard a queer grunt and looked up in time to see a couple of outlandish creatures riding what appeared to be glorified brown sofas into the clearing. The sofas moved with a slow and sure-footed deliberation, holding what might be heads almost down to ground level and from time to time uttering other ponderous grunts and groans. Their riders were muffled—did I say muffled? They were rolled, caked, bound, swathed, swaddled, sheathed, in countless strata of outer coverings until they resembled chestnuts ready to burst. They wore ear tabs, chest protectors, nose pads, cheek pads, and, as though fearful of exposing even a square inch of integument to the wintry blasts, they had donned hair goggles, woven fine to prevent snow-blindness.

As these grotesque spectacles moved slowly towards

The Kaji of Yoksum—a very holy man

Tibetan people

us, the foremost came out from behind several face-protectors like a full moon, ran out his tongue, and held up one thumb in greeting. His eyes were blackened round about comically as a further protection against the glare of the high snows. They halted, dismounted, and both conversed for a few minutes with Sam, who bought from their saddle bags a mess of cheesy curds, garnished with yak hair, that would sustain us for a time. Indeed, these were yaks they were riding—the first I had seen—shaggy creatures rather like oxen, with horns and broad, bushy tails, whose matted hair swept the earth as they trundled along. The travelers from Tibet moved on, running out their tongues politely, the pots and pans with which their mounts were loaded clattering and clanging hollowly with every step like the armor of two Don Quixotes adventuring in Wonderland. They waddled gravely across the clearing, up steeply and out of sight on their huge, ungainly mounts, seeming as they moved in large silhouette just before disappearing, like beings from Mars seeking for a trail back home.

That morning the air was like light wine, even in its iciness, and in leaving Gamothang, I breathed it long and gratefully. But as we wove up to the Oma Pass, it thinned out with every step. There was no especial reason for our discomfort, as we had been over 14,000 feet before, but no logic could deny this lassitude—the lead clamps over leathern bellows that had replaced my lungs—the swarm of bees buzzing in my head—the drag irons on my ankles. Every few hundred feet I sat

down, gasped and waited for the red curtain to lift, while the little pulses sounded off in my ears like a drum corps.

Early winter had already claimed the top of the pass in earnest. Except where the wind had blown irregular bare patches, snow carpeted the hard earth, and icicles like the tusks of mammoths hung from the rocks on every hand. The scenery was wild and dazzling on all sides, the compass of our view extending over large portions of Nepal, Tibet and, in the far distance, Bhutan. We had rounded the top curve of the figure eight I had plotted on the map at Sanga Chelling and were now on the way back to Darjeeling, as the location of the principal landmarks testified. Ahead was a prolongation of the bleak and windy ridge on which we stood. Along it we now made our way, crossing the Devil Pass and the Tiger Pass, both over 14,000 feet, and descending through large slabs of flat rock in chaotic piles like those in a giant's quarry to the little village of Yampoong, where Sam made shift to secure lodgings in the tiny dwelling of a yak herdsman. It was a stone building of one room, and all family activity centered about a fireplace exactly in the center, from which the smoke was evidently supposed to disappear through the floor, there being no other vent for it. Our host had a good-natured face as broad as a shining silver platter. He was a Sherpa—one of the hardy, large-boned mountain race of the north. He, his good wife and their three children fairly outdid themselves to be hospitable. Sam and he enjoyed themselves immensely over a cup of buttered and salted tea, into which they stirred a coarse meal until it was the consistency of gruel. But I sought

relief from the billows of acrid blue smoke that stung my eyes by covering up with a blanket on a rough pallet in the corner.

When we left next morning we were presented with a brick of rough-stemmed black tea. Weary of the cold and the heights, we left the ridge and descended along the valley of a beautiful tributary of the Rathong, turning into a well-defined path not far from the Pemiongchi monastery. The way from here led through a little village rejoicing in a prayer wall over five hundred feet long, adorned with a ceaseless repetition of "Om Mani Padme Hum!" and running squarely down the middle of the road. We passed it on the right, as we had left chortens, cairns, prayer-flags, spirit-guarded passes and devil-haunted mountains, at Sam's earnest insistence, ever since starting. A holy man with a prayer wheel in one hand and in the other a jug of barley beer, which he was sipping through reeds, was promenading around and around the wall, with all the zeal of the trumpeters of Jericho. What possible benefits he thought would result I did not understand. Nor did I yet fathom the mental processes that attempt to wear down the resistance of the deaf gods by repeating prayer formulae hundreds, thousands, millions, billions, quintillions of times, until their very multiplicity, their brute strength piling against the high gates of the godly abode swings them open. "Hail to the Jewel in the Lotus!" It has a pleasant swing, but so has "Off again, on again, gone again, Finnigan" and ceaseless repetition would probably produce as comfortable slumber in the one case as the other. It is a strange thing—a fearful,

nerve-wracking thing—this reckless reiteration. Merit comes to inhere in a strong tongue, and sublimest virtue in the possession of a thick wrist.

Now we dived into the valley of the Kulhait, rose sharply, and stayed the night at Ringchenpong. A day through the forest, another through rank on rank of tea bushes, like green files of soldiers drawn up on parade, and we were nearing Darjeeling. It was market day—there were the bronzed Nepalese women, resembling Sioux squaws; the unassuming Lepchas; the raw-boned Bhootean traders; the lamas in their cherry-colored robes, passing in and out of the impromptu bazaars cluttered over the market place. It seemed as though I were coming home again.

I left Sam in front of the Darjeeling post office with as many rupees as I could afford over his stipend. For the first and only time in our entire association with each other, he grinned broadly. Then he gave me a last salute and strode away, his little cap set at a jaunty angle over one ear; his brisk step giving no indication that he had just crossed some of the roughest country in the world.

For a moment I leaned on my staff and surveyed the white peaks, now once more in the distance. Before I shaved my beard, discarded my heavy hill boots, my dirty coat, and bathed away the dust of my journey, I wanted to gaze across the regal heights and turbulent depths of the little land of Sikkim—to realize for one last moment the glory of the setting sun on Kinchenjunga. All the visible tones in the upper air blended in one last peal of gorgeous color. Then, slowly, with the light, they faded

—faded. Far away towards Faloot soared a self-reliant black dot, floating through a brilliant archway in orange battlements of incredible afterglow. Little by little the besieging powers of darkness scaled the high ramparts. Higher and higher into the ethereal vastness climbed my eagle. My hopes flew with him—up—and up—the final pinnacle was toppling, its blazing banners paled. Alone, defiant, the bird poised for a moment in the last narrow band of radiance. Then, suddenly, he wavered and swooped straight as a plummet for the dark void below—back from an impossible sphere to the finite earth.

CHAPTER XX

Wisdom of Confucius

"Where-ever the Chinese Seamen or Merchants come (and they are very numerous all over these Seas) they have always hideous Idols on board their Jonks or Ships, with Altars, and Lamps burning before them. . . ."

—Dampier's Voyages (1699)

The head of the Calcutta Y. M. C. A. had taken me in one morning when I had arrived at his door during a tropical downpour, bedraggled and soaking wet. Now I thanked him for his kindness, said farewell to the thronging crowds along Chowringhee and the Maidan, and took a deck passage across the Bay of Bengal to Rangoon.

In Rangoon I made a discovery. It was not the Shwe Daigon pagoda, nor the pretty little Burmese ladies smoking saybullies as thick as broomsticks, nor the elephants a-pilin' teak. I was passing a native cinema one day when I noticed that the display bills were advertising, not the customary foreign pictures, but a production featuring native talent. I entered and sat on the floor. It was a fairy tale, with breathless reels of gorgeous pageants and fighting in the sky, against a background of clouds and stars. Nothing like this had ever come out of Hollywood.

I sought out the studio of the Burma Film Co. in the jungle near Rangoon. The director, Mr. U. Maunggyi, had just finished making a 24-part serial entitled "Shwe-

daung Nyo," having to do with the adventures and loves of two brothers who go out into the world to seek their fortune, and he was on the point of beginning another. Littered all about him were the ingenious devices with which he produced his magical effects. At the far end of the room a group of chattering little actresses in bright sarongs were making up. Most of them were girls from the cigar factories, who were reimbursed at the munificent rate of fifteen cents a day. The pictures had been very popular, asserted Mr. Maunggyi. He puffed now and then on a cinnamon cigar hanging by a string from the ceiling. Indeed, they were now more in demand than the works of those old favorites, Dooglas Fairbangs and Charlot Chaplin. One old lady had even pawned her mosquito net in order to see a current success!

The nights were many after that when I would be squatting on the floor among swarms of open-mouthed natives, with a Malay leaning against me on either side and a Burmese baby's feet in my lap, while I ate bananas and pistachio nuts, and thrilled and sighed with the audience.

From Rangoon I took passage on a little coaster of dubious reputation, promised that the ultimate destination was Singapore. But for two mortal weeks we poked along the uneven coast line, apparently picking up and putting off merchandise every ten miles. Sometimes we would anchor at evening off a little village edging a murky lagoon, over which the palms arched in graceful waves, while the natives rowed out in their makeshift canoes and clambered aboard to display their wares for sale to the

Burmese and Indian passengers. The ship was overrun with red ants, which made eating an adventure and sleeping on deck improbable. Each day brought us nearer and nearer to the equator; each day the teakwood decks and the water reflected a few more degrees of intense heat, generally lessened in the course of the afternoons by tropical downpours that seemed always to start exactly on the stroke of four, lasting half an hour, and leaving the ants in excellent spirits.

In a day or two we were surrounded by green islands, their tufts of lush overgrowth fairly bulging from the sea. One of them—one that popped out from ambush quite before anyone realized, bore the famous name of Singapore. I found lodgings at a little Dutch hotel in the very shadow of the famous Raffles, and proceeded to see the town with a brandy salesman from Cognac, France, whose liberality with his very old samples on the boat had endeared him to the hearts of all. Then I waved him off for Manchuria one morning and I was alone once more. That night I strayed along the Street of Fortune Tellers in the Chinese city. I had eaten, with a score of coolies, at one of the myriad rolling kitchens that line the Chinese streets, presided over by jolly fat cooks, naked to the waist, who scoop a mound of rice into their customers' bowls, cover it with a mixture of pickles, pork and peanuts, supply chop-sticks, and charge three cents. I paused to consult the nearest diviner of destinies. He uttered a guttural command. A trained parrot of rainbow hues appeared from behind him, went through a series of acrobatics, waddled over to a sheaf of folded rice papers in a

A Sikh policeman at Rangoon

The path through the bewildered forest

Natives aboard a Malayan coaster of the British India Line

Group of Sikhinese people

cleft bamboo stick, plucked out one and handed it to his master. What it revealed I shall never know, but it must have been happy, for as I walked away I saw a banner across the end of the street proclaiming that the Chinese Universal Film Company was presenting for one night only that latest and greatest sensation—"The Cow Boy and the Weave Maid."

This was the best I had seen so far. Let the English synopsis on the Chinese program speak for itself:

"At the east of the milky-way, there lived a weavemaid who endeavored herself in weaving, year after year. God (played by a Chinaman with long whiskers, seated on a throne) taking pity on her loneliness, granted her to get marriage by throwing the embroidered ball, which consequently fell into a cow-boy's hand.

"He was so called, for he rescued an old cow that was nearly killed by the butcher. This cow became God of Golden-cow-star afterwards.

"After wedding, the weavemaid was lazy to charge her weaving work, and went secretly with her husband, the cow-boy, to the ground.

"God became angry and so commanded God of Nan-tow-star to take her back to heaven for punishment. The cow-boy, after departed his lover, confused all the time.

"At last, they were allowed only to meet each other once a year on the 7th., of the seventh moon, by means of a bridge of magpie."

In keeping with the conventions of the Chinese stage, the cow-boy was played by a girl. The love scenes were terrible, but the director had a real genius for silhouettes

that saved the day. Had not a native band (placed mercifully just outside the front door) insisted on playing "I Want to Be Happy" over and over again, I might have enjoyed the evening.

Singapore held me for a week. Then the eternal question: "Where next?" Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Celebes —all had their inducements. I remembered one of the ideal itineraries I had plotted on my stained map in Calcutta—a course through the South Seas to Peru, thence up the Cordilleras, through Central America, Mexico and home. Yes, that was what I would do. I gathered up my goods and gods and made ready to get away to Surabaya. Then came the news from China. The armies were converging upon Shanghai and a battle was promised. The city was putting itself in readiness to withstand a siege. History was being made. My South Sea plans went by the board.

One night I sat at a table under the hot stars with a jolly group of Dutch planters and ate Java rijs tafel, a gargantuan dish for which I had contracted a fatal liking. Boy after boy appeared to add to the original rice foundation a fantastic superstructure of skewered pork, fried fish, landscaped potatoes, beets, pickles, peanuts, beans, corn, chili and other staples too numerous to mention. Shortly after I had finished, internal conflict in the East held no more mysteries for me. Lest I be tempted again, I set my face towards China in good earnest.

Rather the perils of war than the dread aftermath of another rijs tafel.

My berth aboard the *S. S. Kashgar* had been occupied only recently by a Chinese deck-hand who had left behind him pungent evidence of his occupation. I stowed my things away under it and went on deck. Most of the crew were on the otherside of the boat watching the antics of the coin-divers swarming about the ship. I walked forward to the winches, puffing and groaning as they swung crates of merchandise into the hold. Strange operations were in progress.

Just abaft the mast sat a stolid and contemplative semi-circle of stone Buddhas, ranging in height from a huge one with a milky stone inset in his forehead to a little green fellow squatting at the other end. A group of priests in voluminous robes were superintending the operation. They clustered about an old man and a boy, to whom they were making their farewells. They repeated long ceremonials in unison; they bowed and bowed again. At the height of the ceremonies one of the booms swung in a low arc—there was a crack and a dull thud, followed by the rumble of a heavy object rolling across the deck. It was the head of the mid-most Buddha! Shrieks and wailing interrupted the services. Several of the priests dashed up to the luckless Hindu who manipulated the donkey-engine and thoroughly cowed him with a howling storm of as much picturesque Chinese profanity as holy men may use on such a provocation and in such a place. One dropped into an attitude of prayer and began to tell his skull-beads frantically. The old man stood quietly and regarded the proceedings with sorrow—in his bland and wrinkled face a spirit of resignation. The boy

crossed to the head where it lay in the scuppers, picked it up, and gently replaced it along the lines of breakage. The priests stopped wailing and looked almost satisfied. Still, they observed personally every movement of the harassed Hindu at the controls as he swung the gods one by one to their berths in the hold, and watched as the boy took the head down the ladder himself.

The siren blew a long blast. The priests and their servitors departed; the old man and the boy drew the cowls of their long, coarse robes about them and disappeared into their cabin. As Singapore was fading into the golden haze of equatorial noonday the boy came out, alone. He was dressed in a simple white doublet, with trousers of the same stuff, bound with tape around the calves into leggings. He wore broad and thick-soled Chinese shoes. His hair was completely clipped and upon his scalp was the pattern of little round scars that marks the Buddhist novitiate. He grinned, leaned on the rail and regarded me from head to foot. His square and genial face bespoke amiability. He examined my sweater and trousers with interest, rubbed his shaven pate, pointed to mine, and laughed loud and long. I gathered that he was only trying to be polite and smiled back at him. By this time I had learned to make all the more elemental thoughts known by signs without any difficulty. To an Oriental this knack is second nature. My friend indicated that he and his guardian had been on a tour of inspection through the Straits and were headed back home. Where might that be? He pantomimed a great temple, with many gods in endless rows, and his guardian dominating

the scene. He drew pictures in my note book, explaining by diagrams of a stage and an audience that he had once been an apprentice to the great Mei Lan Fang of Peking, the first actor of all China, but had been redeemed from his life of folly by the old abbot. Carefully assuring himself that the old gentleman was below, he did a little dance to prove it.

His name, he said, was Liu. Mine became Kat Yun. He drew an irregular map of the Chinese coast down into Malaya, dotted it with crosses and made signs of worship. These were monasteries over which his guardian held sway, in a position which would some day be his if he could keep his good resolutions and stay away from Peking.

Liu and Kat spent many hours together in the sun puzzling out each other's rather involved explanations. I managed to teach him the numerals up to twenty, and he proved far more apt a pupil than I did when he attempted to do the same thing for me in Chinese. He had learned many sleight-of-hand tricks during his apprenticeship, which he never tired of displaying. He quickly caught up my cries of surprise, and added "Great Guns!" and "Holy Moses!" to his vocabulary. Soon every trick was prefaced by one of them. According to the radio operator Liu spoke Mandarin, or northern Chinese, as contrasted with the language of Canton and the innumerable dialects used in the various provinces. With him as interlocutor I learned that monastic leadership over the Buddhist forces of eastern Asia was to be Liu's duty. To that end he was to spend two years at the monasteries of

Puto-Shan, a little island about a hundred miles south of Shanghai, to be followed by three years at Oxford.

Of temporal things Liu was strangely ignorant, except as they concerned the stage. He was twenty-four, and had dwelt in monasteries for eight years. His knowledge of religious matters was complete to the last detail, but when we began to talk of such things fingers, diagrams and pictures all failed. So then we called in the radio operator. Liu became quite used to my strange ways and I to his, although I could never make it seem quite proper to stick out my tongue in greeting and inquire on ten minutes' acquaintance into the age and wealth of a perfect stranger.

One dark, rough day in the Yellow Sea when Liu was confined to his berth I sat on deck with a China coast pilot named McAllister, who was entertaining me with tales of the pirates of Bias Bay, and lamenting that he could no longer get the apple pie à la mode which he had learned to love during a six years' residence in the States. The second officer appeared in a companionway.

"Did you chaps notice that little Russian the first few days out?" he asked.

"Him with the yellow teeth?" said McAllister. "Sure. I passed the time of day with him the day we left Singapore and he looked at me like a thunder cloud and high-tailed off as fast as he could go. What's the matter with him?"

"Off his nut. He says both of you are Bolsheviks."

"Ho!" cried McAllister gleefully. "And the only Russian word I know is vodka."

"Well, he's particularly sure about *you* because you're tall. He says the Revolution drove him out of Russia and two men have been following him ever since. Says he's tired of being chased and if you don't let up he's going to knife both of you."

I choked on a biscuit.

"He's just coming from Australia," the mate continued. "Says he no sooner gets placed there than Bolshevik spies show up, and then there's hell to pay. And you've chased him all the way."

"The mug!" growled McAllister.

"He came on at four in the morning. Didn't want to use the gangway. Tried four or five times to climb over the rail up for'ard and couldn't and at last he sneaked up, looking all around like someone was going to pot him if he didn't keep his head down. He hasn't been above more than twice, and he swears that if he does come out one of you will get him. So he's barricaded the door, and I've locked it to boot, and there you are."

"Where is he?" asked McAllister.

"Eight."

Eight! That made it complete, for I was in the very next cabin.

That night I dreamed of blood and disaster. A dozen times I started from fitful dozes, to hear the madman in the next cubby-hole muttering to himself in his bunk on the other side of the thin partition. Having exhausted every criminal possibility, I finally went to sleep. As long as he confined himself to monologues I was unworried.

Two days of this, and we came into Hong-Kong. Liu

was detained by his guardian that afternoon so I went off alone. The orthodox way to climb to the Victoria Peak in the skirts of which the city is built, is by the cableway, a thoroughly civilized device that whisks the jaded globe-trotter to the tea-house at the summit and then whisks him down again. I went up afoot. Through the narrow turnings and the zones of eloquent smell in the lower city twenty-foot streamers advertise the virtues of many mysterious articles. Like Algiers, the city is terraced at a sharp angle, and falls away below more magnificently the higher one climbs. Out of the crowded byways of the densely populated area the streets wind in loops and ellipses, zig to the left and zag to the right, each open space disclosing in fuller splendor the beauty of the harbor. A Chinese girl with purchases tied at intervals on a cord runs up the way ahead of me, in wooden clogs selected for their tuneful and harmonic mellowness, and they seem to be singing:

"Hong-g-g—! Kong-g-g—! Hong-g-g—! Kong-g-g—! Hong-g-g—! Kong-g-g—!"

Past the gardens of affluent merchants and wealthy officials I climb, and by a little wayside shelter built by the rickshaw and chair men, mostly of discarded Standard Oil cans. The day is gray, and the under side of a dark woolly ceiling is only arm's-length overhead. An hour, and the summit is attained. The reward is prodigal. Repulse Bay is a puddle and the harbor an unruffled pool tremendous distances away in the center of the earth. In the shadow of the purple mountains of Kwang-Tung lies the town of Kowloon across the bay. And there—yes,

The snows from Ruichenpong dals bungalow: frosty peaks—tropical—vaporous haze

The lamas of Pemiongchi

there is the *Kashgar*—a piece of match-stick against a wharf no longer than my finger-nail. A British cruiser is firing salutes that blossom from her turrets like cotton balls and cling there until the slow concussions labor up to the Peak.

My eyes sweep down the skirts of the Peak—along roofs that become smaller and smaller, until they merge into a reddish band at the waterside; over sweeps of ocean and tucked-away patches of the bay, whereon skim fragile, man-made shells.

With every step, as I descended, a little of that far-flung world slipped away, and I was nearer the horizonless streets of Hong-Kong. All at once there was a loud clangor behind me. The street cleared magically, and whirring along like Sheridan on the way to Winchester came a little red truck with a score of Chinamen in cuirassier's brass helmets clinging to every available projection and almost hiding it. Fire!

It was burning cheerfully in the third floor of a dilapidated building in a narrow street. The distraught inhabitants were shrieking and throwing their goods onto the pavement. Coolies ran about aimlessly with rickshaw loads of salvage. Everybody was bumping into everybody else and no one seemed to mind it in the least. They looked absurdly like ants in panic at the heel that has destroyed their hill.

Thick clouds of yellow smoke were rolling skyward. The hook-and-ladder roared up and swung into action. A fireman in one of those Etruscan helmets climbed to the gallery of the burning building, and began to heave over-

board large quantities of inflammable junk. Meanwhile his brothers were directing two hose-streams into the place. By virtue of whiteness I managed to slip past the Sikh policemen and inside the fire lines. On either side as far as the eye could see anything through the smoke there were knobby vistas of yellow faces. I walked nearer the engine and looked up at the gallery.

The fire captain was suddenly struck with a brilliant idea. Why not send the hose up the ladder and jam the nozzle full into the flame? Why not, indeed? So up it went. There was no standing on the balcony now, so the firemen focussed from the ladder into the bright red eye of the fire devil and gave the signal. The hose promptly straightened out a crook in its neck and knocked the two firemen off the ladder. Then, spouting, it fell to the pavement like a geyser with vertigo, bowling me over completely and likewise drenching two elderly gentlemen in skirts of black flowered silk. The crowd retreated to a respectable distance. To scores of them the touch of that unfamiliar water would have spelled death.

I refused to stay longer in attendance at any fire which treated patrons so thoughtlessly. I left, wringing the water from my coat. By the time I had reached the Kowloon ferry the air was full of blue powder; lights gleamed from the ships. A hundred feet out the most gorgeously be-jewelled night tapestry I had ever seen began to unroll. With every foot of distance a hundred more glittering points arranged in strange and irregular patterns studded the black velvet cloak thrown loosely

about the foot of the Peak. See Naples—and die? Not so, see Hong-Kong by night—and live!

During the three days up to Shanghai the Russian did not leave his cabin. We arrived late one evening. In the small hours I heard him softly leave the cabin, and watched from a port as he slipped down the gangway by the flickering beams of a wharf light and stole from shadow to shadow along the pier until he was lost in the gloom.

Early the next morning a bevy of priests waited upon the Abbot and Liu. Before joining the procession of welcome, however, Liu gave me a note he had written in his own fair hand on a piece of P. & O. stationery. Grinning and running his tongue out to its fullest length, he went ashore with the rest. I took the note to the radio man.

"It's an invitation to the monastery," he explained. "This asks everyone to whom you show it to help you find the way. But you've got to go by way of Ningpo, which is expected to fall to the Cantonese any day. It would be a pretty risky business. Too bad, isn't it?"

"Not so very," I replied. "Because I'm going anway."

CHAPTER XXI

Temple Bells

"There are in that Kingdom of Cathay more marvellous and singular things than in any other Kingdom of the World. . . . And there are so many islands in the sea that no man can be found in existence who shall venture to say he has seen all those islands. But such of them as are attainable are found to have an infinite store of riches."

—History of Hayton the Armenian (1307)

A low throbbing half-dispelled my dream. Someone looking a trace like Vachell Lindsay was marching along an horizon of glowing light in sharp silhouette and zealously punishing a big bass drum.

I rubbed my eyes and gazed wonderingly into the mysterious moonlit courtyard. A ring of monks in the very center were almost swallowed up in the inky blot of their own shadows. They were chanting in a sad and plaintive tone. Strings and drums added body and rhythm. Several even strokes on a small bell rang out; for a moment that was a gray seed-pearl all was still. A red rim climbed from the eastern sea. In the cloistered depths a great gong boomed once.

Dawn had come to Puto-Shan.

The ruddy light grew stronger; suffused through all the eastern sky and dyed the courtyard a dainty magenta. Even then the processions of priests in their red and yel-

low robes, the dim chanting afar off and the sweetness of eddying incense seemed vague and unreal. Mentally I wandered back to the imported bustle of the Shanghai Bund, the clattering wheelbarrows of Ningpo and the malodorous memory of many fish at Sinkamen, on the Island of Chusan, where I had spent the previous night.

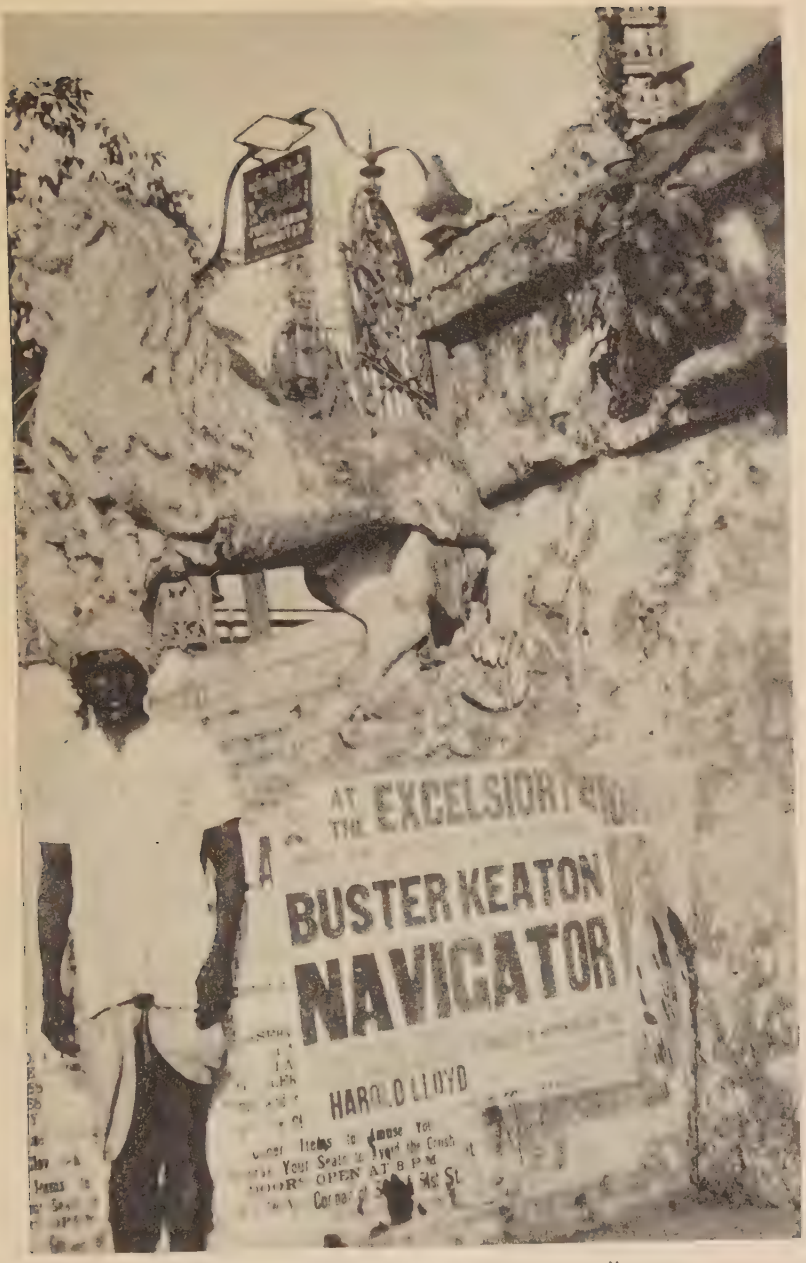
From Shanghai to Ningpo had been a matter of one night, sleeping in a coil of rope on the deck of a tiny steamer wallowing through the choppy waters of Hangchow Bay. At Ningpo it developed that certain confiscations by the military had weakened the steamer service to Puto-Shan exceedingly. In fact, for a time the only available means of transit would be what seemed to be a converted junk with a wheezy auxiliary engine, flapping sails of matting and a sort of treadmill device connected with a water wheel at the stern, in default of both steam and fair winds.

Aided by the friendly compradore of a British firm, I sought out the odd contraption where she lay alongside the Ningpo Bund and boarded her, together with a flock of pilgrims destined for the holy island. Ropes were cast off, after some delay the engine groaned and shivered, leaking steam at every joint, and we stood out to sea. There seemed to be very little prospect of going more than a hundred yards, and that, down. I pay my respects to the captain of that slab-sided scow. Navigating a junk would provide problems galore for even an Annapolis graduate. Not having had such benefits, the skipper of the *Pat Sap* relied upon inborn cunning and sharp eyes. His dirty leather-visored cap askew over one ear, he flat-

footed back and forth from the high-pooped stern to the higher forepeak, shouting involved orders to the four-man crew, peering over the side to ascertain whether we were moving at all, and gazing dubiously into the engine pit as though fearful of an explosion at any moment.

Time and again during the next four hours I thought surely the little tub would burst her jagged seams, fold her crazy sails and give up the ghost in many small fragments to a jolly Chinese Davy Jones. The engine labored, shrieked, pounded, raced and finally went dead altogether. From the midst of the inquest the captain looked at me despairingly. I knew that he was totally ignorant of the antique curiosity, but it would never do to confess that I knew quite as little about it. I had to sustain the dignity of my race. Watched by the sad-eyed engineer, I attacked the archaic thing with a wrench, tapping the 1860 pistons and valves, probing here and listening there with a stethescopic intensity. I ran my finger along the dirty rods with a keen and judicial air, walked coldly around it, tested the levers, kicked the base and shrugged my shoulders. Anyone could see with half an eye that there was no hope. The engine was gone—peace to its remains.

The pilgrims returned to their mats amidships, the crew set the slatting squares of patches and we tacked into the wind. In about half an hour this had faded to a gentle breeze and we were almost becalmed. The captain swore several purple nine-foot oaths, which would have been beautiful framed and hung on one's library wall. Certain of the more devout pilgrims painted prayers in large black characters on red strips of paper. These they



"In Rangoon I made a discovery."

A Burmese Film Company still from "Schwedaung Nyo": the lovers and the good fairies

Bazaars in Rangoon

pasted at various vantage points about the junk where they might most easily catch the eyes of the gods, completely encircling the mainmast with them and covering the upper portion of the prow. But none of these heavenly bulletins seemed to register, and the blue clouds of joss smoke that rose from the waist eddied aloft to indifferent nostrils.

So the captain proceeded, with cajolery and threats, to argue half a dozen of the pilgrims into taking turns on the treadmill, indicating that because of the mechanical skill which I had evidenced I was to oversee them. The turbid flood foamed and surged behind us. We moved slowly towards the nebulous bulk of Chusan Island, which had begun to rise mistily on the horizon, our comical old hulk veering and yawning to the slightest freshening of the breeze and churning up a wake that would have done credit to the Leviathan, as our human engines tramped the weary miles like galley slaves out of Ben Hur.

Late in the afternoon we limped into Tinghai, the capital of Chusan, paused only briefly, and the anchor plumped with a welcome splash into the ripples off Sinkamen that evening. I buried my head in my blanket to escape the odor of fishy putrefaction in the offshore wind. The pilgrims lay sprawled about the deck in the hunched attitudes of men who had marched many miles. Poor devils! They had not bargained to walk to their destination.

We were off in advance of daylight before a spanking breeze, and aided by the efforts of the now willing passengers on the treadmill we made the startling speed of

perhaps six miles an hour. The sun was not yet high in the heavens when the blunt stem nosed up to the sandy beach of the holiest isle in China, the cramped legs ceased pumping and I resigned my commission as first mate of the junk *Pat Sap*. The knowing red eyeballs painted on the bow seemed to roll and wink at me as I sprang to the firm sand of the landing stage and waved farewell.

What an idyllic little mountain islet! I dashed away from my footsore companions and along the neatly bordered trail that rolled away before me. Now and then I paused to inhale deep breaths of the fragrant air, to peer into green little vales all carefully landscaped and to gasp at the luxuriant green of verdant lichens and mosses that already covered the outcrops of huge rocks on every hand.

Presently the trail rose through two long files of camphor trees to a low stone arch. Here sat two wrinkled old monks in their flowing robes, lost in meditation. I approached, bowed and extended to them the invitation Liu had given me. They read it, smiled, bowed graciously and doddered off towards another triple arch to the south, beckoning me to follow. We entered a broad courtyard which I knew must be that of the Monastery of Universal Salvation. This opened into an Imperial Pavillion, then another court flanked by imposing bell and drum towers. I heard a hail behind me. A figure in a yellow robe ran up with an expression of most unmonkish enthusiasm on his face, wringing his hands vigorously and running his tongue out to prodigious lengths. It was Liu.

Nothing would do but that I should proceed at once to the refectory and partake of a full meal of rice, bamboo sprouts and tea. In the course of that meal and while Liu was conducting an animated conversation with me on the board with a lead pencil, I fell into the life of the monastery as completely as if the outside world had cast me off and into this tranquil little haven forever. No more notice was taken of me than as though I had worn the robes and sandals of a monk. I came and went about the island with complete freedom, and in company with Liu spent long, sunny hours exploring its odd nooks and surprising corners.

Next morning I paced slowly with him through the Hall of the Four Fierce Spirit-Kings and saluted their heroic figures; halted to gaze at the blandly smiling Buddha of the Future, who after 5,000 years will open a new era; edged safely but with qualms beneath the mighty Wei-t'o and Kuan-ti, protectors of temples, and at last stood before the great shrine of the patron of the island—the colossal golden figure of Kwan-Yin, Pusa of the Sea, protector of sailors, goddess of Mercy!

During the days that followed we wandered through the meditation groves of cool cypress and orange trees, and lingered at the Holy Grotto of the Flower of the Law with its "fairy well," like a burnished mirror amid the green tracery of branches. Later gardenia florida, like glowing white lamps, would star the woods with the beauty that gives the island its name and has glorified it for a thousand years. Often, tucked away in some leafy retreat, we would stumble on a little temple or the stone

hut of an anchorite with a face of lined yellow parchment reflecting all the wisdom of Confucius. At such interviews we would sit in respectful silence, while the larks and oriental ravens chirruped above, until Liu considered that the proprieties had been satisfied, whereupon we would depart with endless salutations and sometimes a bag of tea.

There are more than 100 monasteries, temples and hermitages on the island, of which the Monastery of Universal Salvation and the Monastery of the Rain of the Law are the largest. About them, like offspring, cluster scores of smaller shrines, many of them decayed and battered by the ravages of time and the Japanese pirates, who during the Ming dynasty laid waste the whole island. It remained almost a desert spot for 150 years. Then the Emperor Kang Hsi restored the two great monasteries with imperial yellow tiles from the Ming palace at Nanking, and these still sweep down in a massive curve to the uttermost ends of the ornately carved beams that support them. About the temples lacy screens of maidenhair veil lightly the walls of old vellum that have witnessed the passage of ten centuries.

At times when fleets of war junks have anchored threateningly offshore, Kwan-Yin, say the legends, has sent her emissaries to frustrate their wicked will. More than once have solid masses of water lilies closed about the ships of plunderers; full often have regiments of poisonous serpents and savage dogs disposed of freebooters who thought to carry off the treasures of the temples.

I spent golden hours basking in the mild sunshine on the large rocks which stud the islet, all of them carved and inscribed. Of these the "Diamond Rock," in the southwest portion, seems to be the holiest. Large characters declare it to be "The World's Most Famous Rock." All are shrouded in legends of ancient wizards, miraculous transformations and words of wisdom first uttered near them in ages long gone. An-ch'i Shêng, an amiable sorcerer who spent his time wandering hereabouts in the third century B. C., is the subject of many of these stone epics.

In such an atmosphere how could one feel other than at peace with the world, since that world included in wave-lapped beaches only the rich incense of Puto-Shan? There were wondrous nights when the moon rose clear and bright behind the five-century-old pagoda of the prince imperial near the south monastery, flooding serenely the royal features of at least two of the Four Kings of Heaven standing guard, one at each corner. Nights when, seen through the fretted lattices of wood at intervals in the walls, she seemed to float like a filigreed galleon in a wan sky. Nights when the heavy silken drapes over the altars rolled and fluttered slowly on mysterious draughts, and the golden dragons on them seemed actually to fly an undulating course across the firmament of blue. Nights when the last intricate rhythm had faded in the temples and the voices of the boy choristers were hushed. Then I would steal alone from the courtyard, past the gilded tablets bearing decrees of long-dead emperors, through the imperial pavilion and to the bridge

over the Lotus Lake, where I would stand at the highest point of the black curve and invoke the spirits of An-ch'i Shêng and his minions from the ebon ripples of the lake and the soft sighing of the winds through the maidenhair trees. Artists and poets have limned the delights of Puto-Shan for hundreds of years, calling it "Heaven's Own Gateway to the Very Throne of God." But the gates are widest in the moonlight, and then the cords of memory are restrung to the days when the necromancers foregathered there and wrought their wonders.

One day we were walking near the rice fields on our way to the Cave of Fan-Yin when a black Chinese cobra slithered across the path and crawled slowly away, taking no notice of us. Liu smiled and pantomimed that there was no danger. Although originally poisonous, Kwan-Yin had sweetened their dispositions. The Cave of Fan-Yin proved to be a vertical fissure in the rock about 60 feet high on the eastern side of the island. From the promontory above we clambered down to a little temple wedged tightly in the cleft not far above the seething surf that roared and surged into the narrow orifice, filling the air with a glittering rainbow of sunlit spume. Incense rose in blue convolutions from the nearby Shrine of the Sea Spray.

But Liu indicated that there was something still better to come. At the cavern of Ch'ao-yin, down near the landing stage, we found an old hermit keeping solitary vigil, gazing out over the crashing waves to far horizons like one of his own gods. We crept out upon a thin projection of the cliff and looked at the blackness within, etched into

Liu of Puto-Shan, my friend the Buddhist monk

A Burmese Film Company still from "Shwedaung Nyo": the two brothers set out to seek their fortune

queer patterns of hissing foam. The grotto resembled an undersea cathedral, through the nave of which surged and rolled all the turbulent passions of old ocean. The sun came out brilliantly from behind a cloud. Liu gripped my arm and pointed reverently within the cave. Through an aperture in the vaulted roof a hazy bar of yellow light slanted down upon the spray-clouds far below. Liu's lips parted in adoration.

"Kwan-Yin!"

Like a cloudy aura—like a faint form in a dream the placid figure seemed to float over the roaring waters. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. It was surely real! Another cloud passed slowly across the face of the sun. The unearthly face seemed to smile as it faded from mortal vision. Only the leaping waves tore where had shone the living image of the goddess.

Liu gathered the full skirts of his yellow robe about him and told his beads in a thoughtful manner as we left the place along another path. This was the trail to Buddha's Peak, the highest point on the island, in whose green skirts nestles the Monastery of the Rain of the Law —the eternal law that descends like the dew from the merciful eyes of Kwan-Yin. The hill slopes were verdant folds and there was a multifloral aroma in the air we breathed. The placid atmosphere of the isle and its even, yet exotic harmony of days caused a pang of regret for departure. Why not live out one's span in the green shade of the meditation groves like the philosophers of ancient Athens?

As we climbed higher and higher the loveliness of the

carefully gardened paradise below met the eye on every side. What a prospect from the topmost tip! On the left Tung-Ta-Yang, the Great Eastern Ocean, piles in powerful breakers of clear blue against the bold rocks—rushes like cavalry into little coves and inlets, already hewn to fantastic forms, and dies in wide fans of hissing foam on the beaches.

On the other side, studded with small islands, stretches the light yellow expanse of Lien-Hua-Yang, the Sea of the Water Lilies—water from the great Yangtze and Ch'ien-tang estuaries, broken by the wind into little waves that curl and dance in a graceful minuet. Below are the terraced green steeps of the rugged hillsides, with the monastery roofs that came from the palace of the Ming Emperor outspread like the yellow covers of two big books dropped carelessly to earth by the gods, lulled to sleep in this other Eden.

I said goodbye to the island and its arcadian pleasures. It was enough that I had walked and worshipped in the shady vales and besides the crystal springs; that I had welcomed the sun each morning as the dawn bell boomed; that I had seen the moon rise in argent glory over the Lotus Lake. I must leave these in all their fresh beauty. Then would this bright glamour never fade.

CHAPTER XXII

Powder Smoke

"What shall I say about it? When day had well broken, there was the Kaan with all his host. . . . And they rushed to work so doughtily with their bows and their maces, with their lances and their swords, that it was a wondrous sight to see. . . . But why should I make a long story of it? You must know that it was the most parlous and fierce and fearful battle that has ever been fought. . . ."

—The Book of Messer Marco Polo, the Venetian (1298)

"EIGHT TRANSPORTS ON THE WAY HERE"

The bulletin in front of the North China Daily News office made the proclamation in fat, black letters. High time! Only that morning several armed Cantonese sympathizers had abducted the editor of one of the leading Chinese papers and taken him for a ride in the best Chicago style. The native sections were a fabric of whisperings. Around the entire French Concession sprawled a barbed wire barricade eight feet high, with *chevaux-de-frise* plugs at every street opening, ready to be shoved into the breach at the first popping of gunfire.

In front of the British Consulate two squads of steel-helmeted tommies were setting up a battery of Lewis guns behind loop-holed breastworks of sandbags. A platoon of Japanese sailors double-quicked past with short, wiry strides. Along the Bund swept a covey of rickshaws full of American soldiers and marines taking

in the sights and trolling several popular airs all together at the top of their voices. A full regiment of Annamite troops from Indo-China in French khaki and cone-shaped helmets with brass tips were disembarking from their transport farther down. And moored in midstream like a row of threatening mastiffs around the arch of the Whangpoo were the new British cruiser *Enterprise*, her slim whiteness ghostly in the haze that lay on the river; the stodgy bulk of the French *Jacques Bouvet*, the American cruiser *Pittsburgh*, flagship of the Asiatic fleet, and an irregular string of Japanese destroyers.

The blare of a brass band resounded down Nanking Road like a full-throated challenge. In British uniforms, field kits and khaki turbans, a battalion of shouting Sikhs just in from India were marching to their billets at the race track, where the Shanghai Home Defense Force had already parked its armored cars and a flight of scout planes was being groomed, to the intense amazement of awe-struck crowds of orientals. An electrical feeling crackled in the air and tales of all sorts flew abroad: the entire Southern Army was at the very outskirts of the city; they were still a hundred miles away; this very night an organized mob of coolies planned to raid the concessions, kill, burn and pillage. One report had them led by a woman; another by Nationalist officers; others declared they were not led at all. It was the season of the Chinese New Year; crackers were popping and bombs bursting among the sampan dwellers along Soochow Creek, each new series of explosions giving rise to a fresh crop of rumors.

Inside her barbed wire, Shanghai blazed. Each night rows of brilliant bulbs outlined the offices and lodging houses along Nanking Road; the imposing front of the Wing On department store was a dazzling study in candle-power, and its tower a radiant spear against the sky. No hint of sudden death disturbed the calm announcements of "cheap sales" hanging outside the smaller places, whose blackly brushed notices swayed in the gentle breeze of prosperity. Muted jazz wafted from the smart dance bands playing in the ballrooms of the ultra-fashionable foreign hotels. At richly appointed mansions in Bubbling Well Road men in faultless evening attire and women in silks and pearls alighted from large motors for parties and military balls. The French, Japanese, British, Russian and native Chinese cabarets ran full blast, crammed with bevies of sing-song girls and rollicking crews ashore from the cruisers for a spree. Mingling with the carefree crowds were British officers, Chinese civil police and American M. P.'s wearing potent automatics.

I pressed through the chattering throngs to the boundary of the International Settlement. What a contrast! At the sand-bagged street entrance was stationed a platoon of tommies, behind a machine-gun mounted in a prepared embrasure. Beyond the wire stretched a No-Man's-Land of dark native streets, and of desolation where the hands of the bandit hordes from Shantung had fallen. Only an occasional prowling figure stole through the murk and crouched before the gate, asking admittance like a stray cat. If questioning and thorough search at

the point of the bayonet revealed nothing suspicious the supplicant was admitted.

"How's for going outside?" I asked the grizzled Durham sergeant at the stile. He looked me over coolly. Just then a hulk loomed outside and called to him in Chinese. It was a Northern soldier in a baggy gray uniform, and from his cap a red tassel hung well below his shoulder—the mark of the company executioner. A private spun him around. Strapped across his back was a murderous elongated meat cleaver. A soldier deposited it on a pile of shillalahs, pistols, bombs and bludgeons behind the sandbags. The sergeant turned to me.

"Well, do you still want to go out?"

I said I did. He opened the way and I ventured into the darkened thoroughfare before me. I could see only a few feeble lights glimmering far away. With no very definite idea of what I was looking for unless it was trouble, I stumbled along for perhaps five minutes without seeing anything more alarming than a bloated corpse lying in a doorway. Then, in grisly procession against the sky, I counted twenty-three heads on long poles stuck into the ground. Some were inclined forward as though in deep despair; some lolled; others held themselves proudly upright. I was still counting when there was a shriek in the distance. A hundred yards away a rickshaw cut a corner on one wheel and sped towards me. Just as it did so a shot was fired and a lantern on the rickshaw flicked out. I could hear the pattering feet of the coolie and the bandits after him. I decided to show that Chinaman exactly how to win an Olympic marathon. Two

more shots lent tremendous wingspread to my feet. The lights at the gate seemed as tiny as the postern lamps on Zion to an erring soul in Hades, but I reached them a full minute before the scared coolie panted in, his rickshaw quite intact except for a neat bullet-hole through the lantern.

The next morning I watched a Punjabi detachment swing along Nanking Road, a darker shade of brown beneath their service turbans. They were brandishing their rifles as they shouted and cheered behind a noisy band. They marched like conquerors, hardly noticing the silent lines of Chinese on the curbs. I thought of the articles I had seen in the Indian Nationalist papers not long before, condemning white oppression. Yet here were brown men fighting yellow men to protect those same hated whites! Strange indeed are the ways of imperialism.

The last rank passed, and I was looking across the street straight into the eyes of—who but Martha! In ten minutes we were discussing the war with her mother in the tea room of the exclusive Palace Hotel, while I, unused to the niceties for lo, these many months, kept my hands out of sight for fear I would knock the teapot off the table. Martha was firm in her intention to stay until she saw a battle. Her mother, a very pleasant lady with silvery hair and understanding eyes, was equally insistent that she leave before the shooting started. (Martha stayed. I knew she would.)

That evening my room in the little half-caste hotel on Szechuen Road became, by contrast, a shoe-box with delusions of grandeur. I began to write. Every evening

someone across the alley conducted a series of wailing devotions, accompanied by the resonant clackings of wooden drums. Clickity-clack-clack. Clonk. The voice grew shriller. Clonkity-clonk. Clackity-clack. Clickity-click.

Whistles screamed. The chanting and clacking ceased. High-pitched voices shrilled in the alley, jabbering incoherently of animal fear. I threw my pen down. Perhaps it was a riot! The Cantonese had planned the whole thing. By morning the streets would be red with the blood of foreign devils. Even now the streets were probably filled with disguised hatchetmen ready for the massacre!

A scared Chinaman rushes in, points to the window and flings his arms upward, jabbering. For a moment a lurid flare illumines the alley. In it the hard red of the bricks across the way is outlined with sharp, threatening black. The crinkly roof-tiles hide a thousand perils. I thrust my head from the window at the same moment that a hungry flame ten feet long leaps up from below. Another fire! The room is a litter. I gather all the odds and ends, stuff razors, chopsticks, tooth-paste and brogues into my pockets helter-skelter and open the door. Suffocating smoke billows into the room. I gallop out into it, hat on backwards, and the jute hill coat bought in Calcutta for seven dollars bulging like a free balloon with all sorts of loose things. The corridor is hot and stifling. Clouds of choking yellow gas eddy around the bare electric light, still burning faintly. Is the head of the stairs at this end or the other? I can't see for the smarting

fumes. Wrong end—the smoke's thicker. I grope my way back. A ball of red flame streaked with dark fury roars from the stairwell, cracks itself like a whip and licks the blistered ceiling with profane lips. Somewhere below the heat is blowing windows out with sighing pops. Beneath the methodical crackling of the fire noises I can hear them tinkle as they fall. No exit this way. But I remember a back stairs to the second floor. I find it and feel my way down, for the lights have gone out. A locked door interposes. Desperate, I crash it in and stagger into a front room just above the street. I drop my bag and climb out through a window, blinking and coughing. The air is a breath of divine hope.

Pathan police are holding back a semicircle of excited Chinese, dyed a flickering red. Big, raw-boned native firemen in white metal helmets are running about aimlessly with hoses, scaling ladders and axes, in obedience to the commands of a little Englishman not over five feet tall wearing brass epaulets as big as saucers. The night is raw with smoke and his profanity. He strikes a lumbering Tartar and kicks another in the seat of his trousers. Veins like knotted cords stand out on his temples. The great brutes cringe and roll off to do his bidding like trained bears in a circus.

A Chinese merchant tries to explain to a bulky Sikh who grabs him in transit that he must save his stocks. The policeman pokes him, mutters through a spiked beard and cows him with a fierce stare. Having consumed three stores and most of the hotel, the fire veers about from Nanking Road and heads in the opposite direction. The

little captain sighs and stands quietly for a minute. There is a black smudge on his nose.

"Think it's about done for?" I ask.

"Hell, it should have been out an hour ago," he growls in strong Cockney from one corner of his mouth. "These damn fools trip over their own thumbs. Not that it wouldn't be a blessing if every old crate on the street did go up, though. I was almost tempted to stand by and let 'em roar."

I went upstairs with him. My room was a charred shell and the window was gone. The trunks of a French theatrical troupe were huddled in a melancholy pile, half burned and slimy with wet plaster. The odor of charred wood was rank and penetrating. There was an inch of water on the floor. In the last room by the gutted stairway two Chinese firemen were supposed to be chopping a hole in the wall in order to put a line through to where fire was still burning. One had paused to tell a story and the other was laughing uproariously. What mattered the fire? The little Englishman pranced around them, breathing thunder and lightning. He smote and kicked them until they howled for mercy. He yelled. He called upon all the Chinese saints to witness their imbecility, looking queerly like a bull terrier snapping at two polar bears. They fell to with a vengeance, widened the hole, dragged a hose through, and in ten minutes the flames had died. The manager, a lanky Scot, paced the hall solemnly. His mein was unruffled. I said something about hard luck.

"Young man, I have lived in Shanghai for forty years.

I have grown to expect anything. Anyway, maybe the Cantonese will burn the whole town before another fortnight. That, my lad, would be an act of the public enemy, and I would be the only one to collect insurance!"

Only a Scotchman would have thought of that.

As the days went by Shanghai took on more and more the aspect of a beleaguered city. Hundreds of coolies labored day and night on the defenses, filling and placing sandbags—unreeling and twisting miles of barbed wire around forests of stakes that marked the boundaries of the settlement. The tommies shut the gates on the open space before the Northern Railway station and the streams of Chinese soldiers and civilians seeking safety in the Concessions became pathetic huddles outside, pressed against the taut wire awaiting examination. Now and then a Russian survivor of the White Forces would be admitted after search.

Meanwhile, a general strike was called in the native city, all the cotton mills were closed and the tramway system halted. Several were killed in minor clashes. One mild afternoon while unrest and suspicion seethed in Shanghai and the foreign language newspapers blazoned in gloomy headlines news of tremendous battles raging not far from the city (in which possibly as many as a dozen men had fallen before unerring Chinese marksmanship) I set out alone for the old Loongwha pagoda south of the French concession, in the effort to regain for at least a short time the unwarlike atmosphere of old China. The day was fine and to ride out would have been sac-

rilege. I swung along over the road to the pagoda drinking deep breaths of invigorating air, and in due course it appeared before me, the roofs rising one above the other like very old reddish umbrellas sagging between the ribs. I sat upon the stone base and gazed across the dappled countryside, dotted with grave mounds, farmhouses and compact hay stacks. It was quite unlike the northern outskirts. No martial shading disturbed the picture; to-day the land was that of Confucius, although tomorrow it might be that of Genghis Khan.

Circling the pagoda for a better view, I became aware of a Chinese boy basking in the sunshine on a large flat rock near its foot. He was dressed in a long robe of black silk, topped off by a round cap with a little spherical button on its exact top. He was eating his lunch and made the friendly paddling gesture that signifies "come closer" in the East. Proud of his English, he inquired with a smile whether I would not eat with him. The memory of breakfast was far back in the antique past. I accepted. As usual, by the end of the meal we knew more about each other than two Occidentals could have learned in a year. Hip Seng, of Nanking University, was twenty and a candidate for professorial honors; his family had been reduced from its former high estate by bandit raids and this was only his second visit to Shanghai.

When we had finished he brushed the remnants of the repast from his moire lap. "Now," he suggested, "you, me go look—see, eh?" So we proceeded at a moderate rate parallel to the uneven line of the Hangchow-Ningpo Railway, and entered the native city by the southern gate.

On the way we passed two patrols of the Northern forces—slouchy giants who regarded us too hungrily for comfort.

Hip was as voluble with his explanations as his limited vocabulary would allow. We squeezed through narrow defiles never meant for more than a single foot passenger, flattened ourselves against the walls to allow rickshaws to pass, and traversed a hundred smell-zones. Sharp, penetrating, hooked smells; odors strong of spices and others not so spicy; flat, bland aromas offering no hint as to their mysterious origins; smells that began with China and are a part of her. Smells of unwashed crowds, of roasted water chestnuts, soy sauce, century eggs, bird's-nest soup, green tea, sweet opium smoke and fried grasshoppers—and other evil and unregenerate smells that defied dissection.

Now and then we stopped before the little open-front shops where astute merchants surveyed the passing world from bales of silks and rich brocades out of Marco Polo, and called for custom in continuous chants extolling the merits of their goods. As darkness fell and the scanty illumination served to make the gray dusk even more impenetrably thick, I thanked my lucky star for Hip Seng. I remembered warnings from well-meaning friends to stay out of the native city at any time, and more particularly at night. Only a few days before a Frenchman had been pulled from a rickshaw by robbers and stabbed.

A pattern of light swam around a corner and we were in the busy Tai Ping Ka. Here was a poster luridly depicting a Catholic priest in the act of plunging a Chinese

baby into a steaming cauldron already full of parboiled Chinese infants, while behind him lurked the shadow of a vengeful white demon supposed to be inspiring the act. Another had a foreign devil with a terrible scowl cutting the throat of a Chinese girl, and a third depicted foreign soldiers (with expressions of awful ferocity) engaged in the bloody business of shooting down peaceful Chinese.

We stopped about six at the tiny chow house of a moon-faced celestial who, Hip Seng explained, was his Uncle Yuen. Here we ate bountifully of rice, pickles and skewered pork and drank much tea from tiny green cups ornamented with yellow dragons. The amiable proprietor crossed his hands on an ample paunch and refused payment. When we entered the crazy street again night had descended fully, but melancholy flares at intervals along the turning, twisting way served somewhat to dissipate the gloom.

Without warning the street debouched into a small open place, crowded with perhaps a hundred merchants, coolies, women and innumerable small children in seatless trousers. All were listening raptly to a mere boy who stood spread-legged on the counter of a shop, bent slightly over, with his hands on his knees and the naked flame that swung below him in a doorway picking out ominous highlights of murky yellow in his features and hardening them into an ominous mask. He was vibrant with sincerity. His face muscles tensed into dark furrows; his eyes were bowmen's slits. He flung his arms in eloquent arcs. I understood nothing but from the shadows at a little distance I could follow the emotional rise of his appeal

—the play of his features in a crescendo of clever exhortation; I felt the waves of enthusiastic agreement thrill through the crowd, and when at last he climaxed it by standing upright with his hands clenched over his head and cried out his closing words in a gasping snarl, his blouse torn open at the throat, I asked Hip Seng who he was. But that worthy was already pulling me down a nearby alley.

"B'long no-good Canton Bolshovak. He say coolie all same strikee, strikee like Russia. Be Number One man, then. Lots eat, muchee drink."

"But that was a great wind-up——"

Hip Seng laughed. "He say shoot out foreign devil—no good stay here. That boy he has was at Sun Yat Sen school at Moscow."

We headed across for the western gate of the Chinese city through chairs, coolies and itinerant merchants seeping along the dark passages. As we were about to leave by the gate I noticed another crowd around a man, bare to the waist, with two little boys crouched low on the ground beside him, one on each side. He, too, was haranguing the gaping throng, but his was a free and easy manner that drew constant merriment from his audience. He rolled up his sleeves and drew a series of mysterious signs on the pavement, interesting the crowd meanwhile with his continual patter. Then one of the boys leapt to a drum at one side and began to beat on it rapidly. The performer grabbed the other boy, lifted him high in the air and dropped him to the pavement. Then he

furiously tore off the boy's blouse, opened a red casket, seized a short sword and—horrible sight—flashed it high, plunged it full into the boy's chest. Blood splashed over the sword hilt, gushed through the hand and spattered those nearest with long crimson streaks as it pumped onto the cobbles in a wide, dark pool. The boy was struggling, his body heaving convulsively, his frightful eyes twitching and rolling, long groans coming from between set teeth. This was terrible! All these silent Chinese made not the slightest objection. Perhaps they would listen to a white man. I edged towards the red butcher in the center of the ring. Again I felt the restraining hand of Hip Seng on my sleeve.

"Wait—bimeby you see!"

Had these people no hearts? They were *laughing!* The rolling of the drum grew louder and more staccato. One last, loud stroke—and the boy with the knife in his stomach sprang surprisingly to his feet and bowed low as he wiped away the "blood," while his master began to collect coppers.

Hip Seng grinned broadly.

We wandered out into the French Concession, while my companion explained haltingly the delights of being educated at Nanking University and how he hoped some day to be a professor with a goatee, much erudition under his little black cap and many significant degrees.

What was this ahead? A cordon of Annamite soldiers swept before them down the street a howling mass of Chinese. There was the tinkling crash of a breaking window. A stone whizzed over our heads and clinked

off a stone wall. The Annamite police were laying about generously with their rifles as the swirling battle closed upon us. There was no escape. We fended off the rioters as well as we could, trying to take cover in a doorway and seem as inconspicuous as possible. Reinforcements for the police, charging into the mêlée, seemed to inflame the mob still further. The air was full of shouts, squeals and the dull thudding of rifle butts on bone and sinew. A paving brick struck a soldier squarely in the face and reduced his nose to a scarlet pulp. He turned and walked away without a whimper, dragging his rifle behind him. One dark figure lay huddled in the street, several nursed their heads on the curbs, another plastered a wound with a handful of offal from the gutter.

I heard a low moan at my elbow. Hip Seng curled up gently and lay down in the doorway, a thin trickle of red oozing from a cut on his temple. A scattering volley of rifle fire blazed from the left. There were hoarse screams. The mob wavered and retreated in disorder, with the Annamites in hot pursuit as the broil eddied away into the distance. It took several minutes of restorative measures from a bottle in a nearby cafe to bring Nanking's star scholar back to consciousness. He complained of a splitting headache and walked a trifle unsteadily. We made our way to the Bund and from there back to my room, where I bathed his wound with a handkerchief and tied his head in a neat bandage. At ten he pronounced himself sufficiently well to proceed to his Uncle Yuen's unaccompanied. In fact, he intimated that it would endanger my own health to go with him. So he

grinned gratefully and departed. That was the last I saw of Hip Seng, but a few mornings later I found a pink envelope with large gilt characters in my box. On a sheet of rice paper was a Chinese boy in a green robe smilingly upholding a large red fish lantern on a short standard, while the legend above declared:

Greeting

New Year day! Cum, chop away!
Hup gut moony blanday! Makee blanday! Largee jance, no blong jokee.
New Year luck, my shamsoo drink. Alla good pidgin my bling.
Pruppa and jolly allgutta thing my Chin Chin joss alla long.
Makee happy and strong. Blong No. I ricilee man! Hup gut doo muchee drink and Sing-Soong.

The sentiment, I thought, was beautiful.

The Northerners were falling back upon Shanghai, but in such a leisurely manner that one would have imagined them to be practicing maneuvers. The grave mounds, embankments and rice fields outside the wire of the French Concession offering some cover, several thousand of them paused there. Behind them, hardly noticing the little rearguard resistance, came the Nationalists, advancing in double file along the railroad, well equipped and with a liberal sprinkling of Russian officers.

A great parade was held in the native city by the rejoicing population, delighted at the prospect of deliverance from the Northern yoke. Thousands of men, women (and children with no trousers-seats) swept through the narrow streets, carrying banners exulting in the downfall of their oppressors. Here and there along Nanking Road a flag with a field of red and a blue star was flung out a window, presaging the red wave that was to billow along the street before many days.

Only a short time afterward the powder keg exploded. The labor unions of Shanghai, converted to the red doctrines of Canton by just such boy orators as I had seen at work that night in the native city, were being subjected to a deadly campaign of guerilla warfare by anti-nationalist gunmen. To defend themselves, they had organized military companies and drilled four hours a week. Beneath the even flow of life in the native districts rushed torrents of threats, hatred and fear.

One morning a company of British machine-gunners, lying behind their sandbag barriers in North Honan Road, were startled to see a yelling mob of Chinese soldiers pouring through a breach in the defenses around the International Settlement near Boundary and Range Roads and sweeping down upon them like a yellow tidal wave. Surely they were Cantonese, bent upon capturing the city! The Lewis guns quivered—hot sparks leapt from their barrels. The onrush melted into bloody heaps of dead and writhing wounded. The street that only a moment before had been a quiet and orderly thoroughfare was piled with almost two hundred bodies. Later

it turned out that these had not been Cantonese at all, but Shantung troops, reputed to be the worst assassins in China, wildly frightened by a report that the Southern armies were about to close in about the city. Maddened with fear and days of red slaughter, they had crashed the gate of the Concession, seeking protection.

Meanwhile the entire area around the Shanghai-Nanking railroad station just north of the settlement boundaries had been laid waste and the line cut in many places. Rose the embattled workers of the labor unions. They stormed the arsenal and police stations, took over power in the Chinese districts, and captured both north and south railway terminals.

Northern troops, enraged by the killing of their fellows in North Honan Road, set fire to the city as they retreated and picked off the inhabitants with machine guns as they ran from their burning homes. Scores were mowed down mercilessly. And as the firemen came out of the station they were sniped, in order to allow the fire to spread without hindrance. The little Englishman's lumbering followers lay in a jumbled heap. They would never fight the flames again.

CHAPTER XXIII

Of Bathing In Public

"This Iland of Japon is a great land. . . . The people are goode of nature, courteous aboue measure, and valiant in warre. They are gouerned in great ciuilitie."
—Letters of Will Adams (1613)

The *Nagasaki Maru* steamed down the Whangpoo and out into the China Sea. The cruisers faded, and the flags and the marching columns. The steerage was not comfortable, and the passengers were packed in three deep, but all were enduring their difficulties with the good humor that is a Japanese national trait. However, by coöperating so that five or six rolled over together it was possible to sleep with a fair degree of ease. But I had to remove my shoes every time I crossed the mats.

The Japanese passport official made his examination en route. When he got around to me I was squatting on a matting elevation at one end of the common cabin with my shoes off, engrossed in an old copy of the North China Daily News. From somewhere in a chunky black leather case he extracted a large piece of yellow cardboard with lines of cross-hatched ideographs running all over it. He regarded me sharply over the tops of his spectacles. Then he began to fire questions, pausing now and then to make copious entries and, in the ensuing silence, to scan me coldly, then his record, then me, as though in such a

fashion to read confirmation of his doubts. He marched around my ancestral tree and swung back and forth through the branches. He attacked my statements as to avowed purpose, or lack of it, tried to find a flaw in my visa, and attempted to wheedle the admission that I was a Bolshevik, on propaganda bent, to the utter ruination of the Japanese Empire. Exactly why should a white man, especially an American, be traveling steerage? He was positive that I was Moscow's special agent, and pressed his suspicions so persistently that I began to have doubts myself, especially as this was the second time. But presently he back-tracked on my age, dwelt for a couple of reams on the disparity between the stained passport photo and my actual appearance, and came up the home stretch with a burst of fireworks on everything we had covered during the term. And at last he grudgingly gave me my entrance permit. Little men shadowed me at discreet distances every day until I left Nagasaki, but I didn't hasten away any faster merely because of that.

Ten Shahs of Persia sitting regally on ten overstuffed thrones and uttering one loud and simultaneous "Bah!" were the innocent means of my remembering the Japanese word for railway station. "Ten-shah-bah" was the first and handiest expression I picked up in the Flowery Kingdom, and as long as I could remember it I was fairly sure of getting to Tokyo in time for the funeral of the Emperor. First, however, I wanted to tarry in Nagasaki for a few days and catch my breath between a civil war and a royal interment.

After solemnly assuring the doubtful customs authorities that I had no uncles in Vladivostok, I was passed and left the shed so quickly as to arouse certain suspicions that I had a set of whiskers concealed somewhere. Near the wharf a story teller, surrounded by a gaping crowd, was pantomiming some thrilling exploit in the life of an heroic samurai of old. Now and then he would burst into excited shouts, capering up and down and clicking his heels together as he slew legions of imaginary giants. When he had concluded and taken his collection the throng eddied to a vendor of knick-knacks across the street, whose repartee kept them in a roar. I wandered down the street with the address of a Japanese inn written on a piece of paper and ready to show at all doubtful corners. An obliging coolie conducted me to its very door. I knocked.

Appeared in the door a fragile form daintily encased in a striped blue kimono. She hissed pleasantly and bowed from the waist half a dozen times, tiny hands folded on her wide obi, her smile broadening each time she bent over. From the gloom behind her materialized a small middle-aged gentleman in black, who likewise made low obeisance and gave me to understand that I was completely and tremendously welcome. I was hissed into the tiny anteroom, hissed out of my shoes and into soft slippers. A corps of serving girls directed by the proprietor himself scurried sibilantly about in wildest confusion of arrangement, as though I were a state official instead of an unkempt wanderer who had spent all night on a hard floor and looked it.

My room proved to be a simple square apartment, carpeted with cushioned mats and with walls of heavy translucent paper, opening on one side onto the street. The panelling of the chamber was of teak inlaid with intricate arabesques in mother-of-pearl, but apart from this there was no hint of decoration. I sat on the floor and waited for something to happen, carefully choosing a position removed from a paper wall. People are so apt to get careless and fall through a wall into the street when they and passersby least expect it.

Presently the door slid open and another tiny maid smiled demurely at me over a steaming tray.

"Ohio," she said.

I nodded in astonishment. "How did you guess?"

But she only drew in her breath and set the tray down before me. Later I learned that "Ohio" means "Good Morning," and is not in Japan the name of any state other than that of good will.

A special lunch was served by this apparently omniscient person, who was my nesan (elder sister). She sank to her knees and arranged before me in a semicircle numerous little lacquer bowls laden with chopped beef, raw fish, soy sauce, radishes and creamed lily root. From these she selected toothsome morsels with which she garnished the big dish of rice rising in a white cone before me. Then she sat back on her feet, hissing gently, and held in readiness the jug of warm saké, or rice wine, which accompanies every Japanese meal. Despite some training in China, I was not yet adept in the use of the chop-sticks, and it was not until she showed me how to pivot one firmly

and use the other as a pusher that I became efficient. All of which was to the nesan hugely humorous.

That evening the same ceremony was repeated. When bed-time came I had curled up on the padded mats when my little nesan appeared once more and minced across the room, her mountainous coiffure bobbing from side to side like a doll's wig. She touched a lacquered panel inset in the wall and it slid back, revealing a number of thin mattresses and what seemed at first to be a strait-jacket, but turned out later to be a heavily wadded kimono for use as a sleeping bag. A hard, cylindrical pillow packed with fragrant tea leaves completed the outfit.

When I had tried the layout and pronounced it good the nesan brought in a night lamp which she set carefully by the pillow, and took out the brazier, in which smouldering charcoal warms the fingers of the family circle that clusters about it in Japanese homes, quite universally innocent of other heating. After discarding the pillow it was not hard to go to sleep.

Next morning after the removal of the breakfast dishes I advanced in full force upon the bath-room. I had heard dark tales of Japanese bathing habits, but I was hardly prepared to open the door, while very lightly clad, and meet the spectacle of a dozen guests of both sexes splashing about merrily in the large bath tank quite *au naturel*, apparently with as much assurance as though they had been sheathed in deep sea diving suits, and a lot more grace. When the banto (bath-boy) signalled to me and cried "O-Yu!" my resolution ebbed like mercury from a broken thermometer. Muttering faintly over my shoulder

that I had forgotten something, I fled ingloriously.

Still, the bath had to be taken. After half an hour I stole once more to the bath room. It was empty! But no sooner had I entered and prepared to slip into the pool than the rotund banto appeared, his eyes large with horror. He caught me on the ragged edge with one hand and indicated a basin at one side with the other. This, it seemed, was the spot for one's main ablutions—the pool was to remain pure and unsullied for the use of posterity. How gauche, indeed!

Aided manfully by the banto, the sum and substance of whose profession is to wash the backs of the transient public, I struggled through the principal phases of the cleansing in boiling hot water, rinsing in the sacred tank with a feeling that a short prayer would close the service admirably. Just as I climbed out, the door opened and the tiniest maid I had yet seen made for me with a large towel and that unruffled expression with which she would have prepared to dry a pile of dishes. Uttering a hoarse shout, I vanished from before her astonished eyes, leaving her to exchange with the wondering banto pointed observations on the queerness of the *seiyoken* breed generally and this one in particular.

None of this feeling was evident, however, when I checked out later in the day and bestowed upon the host and my nesan their tea money, which according to immemorial custom is equal to or greater than the amount of the very moderate bill itself. Hissing amain, both entered my room, touched the floor respectfully with their heads and backed out again, smiling and bowing. At the

moment of my departure the entire establishment gathered at the door, sounding like a compressed air valve, and assisted me into the street, bowing, smiling, waving and joyfully crying invitations to return as soon and stay as long as possible. And was it an ironic humor or a friendly desire to help that impelled the choice of a large woolly towel imprinted with the crest of the house as a parting gift, and as its giver, the maid of the bath?

CHAPTER XXIV

An Emperor Passes

"I did greatly desire to see the King's Burialls, because of the wealth therein . . . every grave hath a piece of gold at the head and another at the foot, weighing at least five hundred pound, cunningly embossed and wrought . . . richly set with stones. . . ."

—Voyages of John Davis, the Navigator (1598)

All Japan was bound for Tokyo. From every quarter of the Empire were streaming loyal subjects of the Mikado, intent upon paying him their last respects. In Shimonoseki special cars were being decorated; at Miya-jima, on the Inland Sea, I saw the entire battle fleet drawn up in review; at the ancient capital, Kyoto, whole caravans of Shinto priests guarding ceremonial relics passed slowly by the great bell of the Chion-On Temple, as ten novices swung on the long wooden clapper until the air quivered against my ear drums. Battalions of infantry, all equipped with flu masks, marched steadily along the roads; country folk crawled past in two-wheeled carts; the station stairs at every halt resounded with the clacking of wooden geta as crowds rushed to the trains. From a distance even Fuji looked as if he were preparing to gather his white skirts about him and go up to Tokyo to bow before the bier of the Sun's revered descendant.

On the important afternoon I stood in a dense throng near the gate of the Imperial Palace at Tokyo, as that

same sun's vermillion globe swung lower behind the pagoda of the summer pavilion within and half closed his eye below the horizon. Gray and purple washed the warm glow from the ancient walls and the little groves of dwarfed trees. The moats filled with ink. Within the gates hundreds of flaring torches bobbed back and forth, redly revealing a vast parade of rank on rank. Motors sped from the gates and couriers ran to and fro. Over the thousands outside hung a death-like silence.

I looked down the avenues leading away from the palace; compact black masses, under the blackly festooned buildings, I knew for the multitudes who were waiting to pay their last earthly respects to the Emperor Yoshihito. Now he was known as Taisho Tenno, in accordance with the custom of changing the name at death. The streets along which the cortège would pass had been strewn with snow-white sand earlier in the day; they gleamed a ghostly ivory in the curling flames of hundreds of torches erected along the way, reaching with tall prayerful tongues from iron baskets. The twilight was dotted with long, irregular rows of yellow lanterns like gently swaying buoys on a sea of eternal night, and with red and pink lanterns billowing softly like illumined rose buds in the cool reaches of the waiting, listening avenues. On each of these lanterns was painted the solitary ideograph "Farewell." Farewell to Taisho Tenno, of the "line unbroken for ages eternal," direct descendant of the sun goddess—hundred and twenty-third Mikado of Japan! Before dawn his body must be in the great sepulcher newly built for him twenty-two miles away at Asakawa, in order

that the tradition may be fulfilled—"The imperial spirit shall go from darkness to darkness."

All day I had wandered through the streets of Tokyo, watching the gathering of the great crowds that had come from every prefecture in the Empire to pay the final duty to their liege lord, the head of their faith and the focal point for their intense and unquestioning patriotism. Rich and poor; halt and sound; blue-uniformed students in massed ranks with badges and banners of mourning; poor people with mats and food enough for twenty-four hours, encamped at points of vantage where they had spent the previous night in order to see the procession; marching columns of diminutive soldiers and sailors; oceans of little ladies in striped over-kimonos and men in long double capes like opera cloaks. Rivulets and runnels of people, eddying to and fro in the neighborhood of Hibya Park; streams and torrents of people, flowing in and out of the gates at the Tokyo central railway station; solid tidal waves of people crashing politely through police lines whose apologizing sternness availed not a whit.

All afternoon I drifted with the thousands, quite unable to make anyone understand a word of English and with only a nebulous idea of direction. Every time I attempted to ensconce myself in some position along the route of march a policeman, smiling with the effort of a hostess who approaches an uninvited guest, would politely invite me to show cause why I should remain. It seemed that a ticket was necessary, or a badge. After this had happened several times I saw a paper with several large

"I stood in a dense throng near the gate of the Imperial Palace at Tokyo."

"All Japan was bound for Tokyo"—waiting for the Emperor's funeral procession.

Schochi-ku Kinema Company

The Schochi-ku Kinema Company: dirty work at the crossroads

and authoritative characters on it, that looked exactly like the arm bands everybody was wearing. It was a blue paper, and appeared extremely official. I picked it up and pinned it to my sleeve, inflated my chest and trod with seeming dignity into a section just below the statue of Admiral Togo in front of the Admiralty Building. Here was a gallery of little men in ludicrous silk hats sitting in rows under the wall. I occupied a seat, taking pains to show my badge to all who started to question my rights. Slowly the little men in the tall hats forgot their dignity and began to laugh. The inevitable policeman appeared. I folded my arms in order to display the band. The policeman grinned from ear to ear. On all sides were gleaming teeth. Refined chuckles came to my ears. Why was this? The policeman was making the customary signals. Disgusted, I pulled my hat over my face and moved on. Next day I found that the legend on the paper said something about being closed until further notice!

As the sun sank, I found myself by the sloping walls of the Imperial Palace. I walked completely around it, dodging guards, columns of infantry and avalanches of country people gazing in open-mouthed wonderment at the tops of the pavilions with the turned-up corners, rising between the copses of dwarfed pines. With the approach of the climactic hour for the procession to start a hush descended on the crowds along the avenues. Solemnity permeated the millions who packed every approach for blocks. The eyes of the nation were on this gateway to the palace. Here, for a moment, was the essence of old Japan. Queerly, melodies from "The Mikado" mingled

in my mind with the measured booming of the minute guns.

"Do you want to know who I am—who I am?
I'm the Emperor of Japan—of Japan!"

Faint strains of a dirge swelled into slow chords that issued from under the great arch; the first flambeaux of the cortège came through, held on high. For the moment all attention was directed to the gate. Eluding the hosts of policemen and soldiers, I slid under the ropes and to a mat between two startled old gentlemen who were, however, too much occupied with the march of events to protest.

Forth sallies another double file of torches, flaming high, followed by regiments of soldiers and platoons of sailors with arms reversed. Military bands bear heavily on the minor strains of sad, slow marches. Court attendants appear, clad in splendid silken apparel of purple and green, glittering dully in the yellow torchlight and the soft radiance from the torch-towers of green bamboo.

All over the city temple bells are tolling, and their soft, mellow reverberations mingle with the booming of the guns. Surely in the old days the earth was rent in twain, shadows obscured the moon, and spirits flew abroad when an emperor was carried to his last resting place!

Now come government officials in the fantastic headdresses of two thousand years ago, resembling flat, circular blue springs balanced on edge. The next section bears the sacred drums. Then appear men in straw

sandals carrying long arrow quivers; three exquisitely apparelled court attachés spaced at intervals and each bearing a gold casket containing the Emperor's most cherished possessions, to be buried with him. Two more with the sacred Sakari trees; bearers of food for the gods; a company in the uniforms of samurai, with the bows and tall shields of the feudal epoch.

There is a short, dramatic interval. Then a single great sob seems to tear at the heartstrings of the watching multitude. I see four black and white bulls in the archway, pulling slowly the catafalque of the Emperor. Slowly, like souls at the last judgment, the crowd sinks to its knees, awed and stricken. What a harmonic chord of wails and prayers! A deity is passing! Laments mingle with the seven squeals of sorrow from the two wheels of the funeral carriage, cunningly wrought by the Nishioka family, which alone knows the secret of the tone gradations produced by the axles. Following the royal hearse in double lines come the pallbearers, men of the Yase district, near Kyoto, whose ancestors have seen their emperors to the grave for twenty centuries. The sacred bulls roll from side to side as they labor along. The squeaking of the wheels continues to be audible above the wave of moaning as it passes. Prince Chichibu, second prince of the blood royal, follows sole and sorrowful, and the Keeper of the Imperial Mausoleum, with the Emperor's sword. Wailing Shinto priests, beating drums carried in their hands, conclude the procession. It moves forward to the ceremonies at the Shinjuku gardens, four miles away, and thence to Asakawa, the tomb. But not

for a half hour after the last priest has passed do the police allow the crowd to leave their places.

A few days later, near Asakawa, I watched the workers build the high oval mound that surmounts every Japanese Emperor's grave. Since no human foot must ever afterward touch this, the workers had donned white robes and had been symbolically transformed by Shinto priests into birds, that they might fly with earth and sand to complete the work. The hillock was to be covered with white sand, and would have forever an imperial guard of honor. Every worker at the tomb had had his family investigated for several generations, and had been sworn to secrecy regarding the nature and dimensions of the sepulcher underneath. The entire funeral had cost about two million dollars, which had been gladly appropriated. For the passing of an Emperor is no small thing, and the duties of loyal subjects must be discharged in a manner pleasing to the gods.

CHAPTER XXV

The World's a Stage

"We went to vizet the antient monumentes of Japon, and amongst the rest the pagod, or monument, erected in remembrance of Ogosho Samma, the last Emperour. . . . All of which is seated on the side of a mountayne among a greate wood of pine trees, most pleasant to behould."

—Diary of Richard Cocks (1618)

At the Sailors' Y in Yokohama one meets far more interesting people than any one of the fashionable hotels could offer. Natty young sailors of the Merchant Marine mingle with old salts, the wake of whose remembrance goes back to marlinspikes and main-sails. The talk skips from Hong-Kong to the Guinea Coast and over to Tierra del Fuego in the twinkling of an eye. And there is always some rare old character who is not averse to reeling off tall yarns of pirates and cannibal islands by the hour. There I anchored until I could write and send off several new articles. I found that I had just enough money left to pay for a 'tween-decks passage to San Francisco on the *Korea Maru*, sailing in two weeks. As the Y was full of perfectly able seamen waiting for the first job that came along, and none seemed to be coming, I bought the ticket and began to wonder what I was going to do about eating for the next fourteen days.

However, a few yen, if carefully stretched, will work

wonders. I pooled my fortunes with several Stanford students whose ship had sailed away and left them, and together we made a pilgrimage to the great Buddha of Kamakura and other adjacent wonders. One evening after they had gone I chanced into Yokohama's Theater Street. Chromatic posters depicted slant-eyed d'Artagnans holding at bay bristling hordes of very obvious villains, bedight with purple armor and scarlet sashes. And evidently there were a few offerings of a more modern nature, for here a young devil in a dinner coat was strangling a placid damsel on the edge of a crumbling cliff, and there an elderly gentleman in a towering rage was calling down maledictions printed in dainty pink upon the heads of two police officers. I enter one of the theaters. The doorman hisses with pleasure at being thus signally honored by the honorable foreigner, and after a personal introduction to the keeper of the footgear, I feel sufficiently familiar to go in without further ceremony. My shoes are removed in a twinkling and in lieu thereof I receive a large tag. The keeper then places my brogans proudly at the top of a heap of geta—clean, muddy, lacquered, plain. A demure little toyo san bows me to a seat on the matting floor.

Darkness. A tiny bulb lights just to the right of the screen. Above its feeble glow I see the seamed visage of a man looking curiously like Lon Chaney, framed in a sort of stage box. He salutes the audience and introduces the picture. Then he claps his hands sharply and the film begins. He thoughtfully reads the captions and cast of characters. The first scene appears. It is a seaside,

Mirror-like pools reflect trees and mountains on either side. Hungry fishermen are casting their nets. The hero is overseeing the operation. Nets are drawn—no fish! Much wailing and gnashing of teeth, simulated by the versatile explainer. Shot of dagger being drawn from sheath, then of hero's agonized expression. Sailors disarm him. Big scene of swearing vow to try again. They put to sea. Long shot of clouds gathering on horizon. Storm rushes down. Thunder and lightning from the interlocutor, with shrieks and stamping for good measure. Waves, wind through cordage, lamentations of sailors, fused into one quavering howl from the explainer. Flash of sailors struggling in the angry waters, then survivors crawling up a beach. Soldiers break from thicket and take them captives. Shot of hero behind bars. Seamen are huddled before Lord of the Isle. They are enemies, they must die. Closeup of pity in eyes of princess. Shot through purple filter of tiny figure stealing along prison walls. Palpitating love scene below hero's cell. File tossed up. Rasp, rasp, rasp from Lon Chaney. Rasp, rasp, rasp. And the bar obligingly gives way. The lovers steal away together. Scene: a wood. A hut in the wood. Honorable lover, we are pursued! What to do? Dagger is produced. Hara-kiri. Enter father and courtiers. Wild and unreasoning grief. Out swords. Wholesale self-effacement. Lon Chaney beats on the pulpit and screams. Finis. The audience is weeping and satisfied.

The screen rolls up and the curtains part on a spoken melodrama. The scene is Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese War. A lone sentry is guarding a flagpole fly-

ing the banner of the rising sun. Applause. Door down left gives onto concrete turret full of machinery. Officer enters and tells sentry to guard that turret with his life. Sentry salutes officer, flag and turret. Applause. Russian spies disguised in whiskers, astrakhan caps and long coats creep in on their stomachs and plot aloud.

Here a baby who has been toddling the length of one of the raised ledges that serve as boxes on either side of the theater misses his step and falls into my lap. I restore him to his mother above. She bows. Those nearby beam and hiss gratefully. The show proceeds.

Despite a terrific resistance the guard is overcome and bound. And I hear for the first time the gasping cry which is synonymous with tragedy in Japan. This is nothing more than an undeveloped cough, or a short, gusty sneeze, but Japanese dramatic technique has rooted it among the fundamentals. While the sentry gasps, the spies plant bombs in the turret, sneer at the guard, leer at the flag, and wriggle away on the frogged buttonholes of their long coats. The fuses burn. The sentry rolls over painfully and squirms towards them. Loud applause. Rolling of gunfire in barrel offstage. Explosion will be signal for Russian attack. Sentry makes supreme effort. He looses ropes, scoops up bombs and runs offstage with them. Loud roar as they explode. Fighting on the stage. Pall of smoke, illumined by flames from the eight rifles of the Russian army. The onslaught is driven off. The defenders bring in the gory body of the brave sentry, who delivers an address on loyalty and dies. Two friends fall on their bayonets and pass on, gasping. The flag is

lowered as the bugler sounds a stirring call and a salute is fired. Banzai! Hurrah!

I turn to see the man with a flushed face, who has been shouting at intervals during the battle, grab my shoes and wobble off unsteadily with them. But he lacks speed owing to the load of saké he carries and is quickly overhauled. I snatch the shoes and immediately put them on, to the delight of the crowd that has followed. The man goes his irregular way, muttering.

These pictures were the most finished I had seen. I decided to visit one of the studios. It should make a good story. So I applied for a pass at the office of one of the companies. They were suspicious; I might be a spy from Hollywood. Perhaps, if I came back some other time, it would be granted. I fooled them. I did go back. And I came away with the pass.

CHAPTER XXVI

Japanese Cinemactor

"But the matter I noted most of all was their Comoedie (or Play) the Actors being the Kings themselves, with the greatest Noblemen and Princes. The matter was of the valiant deeds of their Ancestors. . . . I never saw Play wherein I noted so much, for I see their policie is great in doing thereof, and quite contrary to our Comoedies in Christendome, ours being dumb shewes, and this the truth it selfe. . . ."

Voyage of Captain John Saris to Japan (1613)

"Hai!"

On three sides long mercury lights stutter and burst into blinding blue flame.

"Hai, hai!"

A fine, even clicking begins. Two turns to the second, the wiry arm of the little brown camera man moves in small, easy circles.

Centered in the bold glare from the radiant tubes and sitting on her feet in a nest of silken cushions, a pale, lovely girl in a billowy Nipponese head-dress raises sad eyes to the camera. In an agony of grief she falls gracefully forward, her tiny hands clasped before her eyes like a flower in mute supplication.

I whisper inquiry.

The long eyes of Mr. Ichikawa, tragedian extraordinary, are nearly round in excess of admiration.

"Hush!" he breathes, sotto voce. "Kurishima Sumiko, greatest actress in Japan!"

We were standing in a sort of glorified greenhouse on the main stage of the Shochi-ku Kinema Company at Kamata, midway between Tokyo and Yokohama, which, with twelve directors and twenty-four films a year, is the largest in Japan. Fortunately my friend, Mr. Ichikawa, was idle from the outdoor set where he was daily registering great indignation as a downtrodden member of the proletariat.

The clicking ceased. Miss Sumiko reassumed an upright posture and extended one small hand to a waiting maid, who quickly supplied a little bamboo tube selected from an array on a diminutive tabouret. The star carefully placed a crystal drop from the phial in a corner of each eye, and faced about for the next sequence with large tears welling pathetically down the clear whiteness of her cheeks. She wore no rouge or color of any kind on face or lips, but her eyelashes and brows were heavily penciled.

"Story of Hisako San," volunteered Mr. Ichikawa. "Japanese classical singer of old time. Tragedy—seven reels."

Kurishima was gazing at a picture of her sweetheart. That tragic gasp! Again, and again!

"All good picture end in hara-kiri," asserted Mr. Ichikawa with an air of authority. "Disembowelment, you know. That is way of honor."

Kurishima is singing "classical songs of old time" in a terrible falsetto. Truly tragic! Enter Mr. Kinsei Hotta, cast as her sweetheart. Terrific mutual agitation. She

drops to her knees and gazes piteously into his face. Apparently he is on the verge of clearing for parts unknown at the earliest possible moment. The hunted look in his face shows it clearly. Both seem to sense that he is leaving forever. Farewell! He grasps her firmly by the elbows and holds her at arm's length, gazing with eyes full of smouldering passion deep into hers. The big climactic moment of the play!

Suddenly he arises and fades through a door in the rear of the set. I am stunned. Mr. Ichikawa smiles and elucidates.

"No kissing like in American film. Bad and immoral."

What! No kissing? No last, long, lingering fade-outs? No silhouettes against the setting sun as the strong, silent man claims his own? Why, this was treason! I shuddered to think what a Hollywood production would do without its stock finale—what the tired business flapper would think of this expurgated version.

"A'right!" ejaculated the director. Action ceased and the tubes flicked out. Mr. Handi Kotani, formerly of Hollywood and points west, grinned and ran his hand over a thick hairnet. Through the hoarseness caused by shouting "Hai!" (yes) to start his action and "A'right!" to stop it all morning he denied Ichikawa's remark that he had taught Japanese camera winders all they know of the art. But that was only for the sake of modesty. He was not too tired to be very, very courteous. Would I care to meet the inimitable Kurishima herself—not a moving picture?

The little lady smiled graciously and waved us to seats

on the floor of the set. I removed my shoes as a polite gesture and chatted with her through the medium of the two gentlemen. She was pretty, in a wistful, fluttery, orchid-like way, but a little waxen under her deep layers of facial whiteness. She was glad the honorable foreigner liked Japan. This America, too, it must be a marvellous country. As she poured our tea she chattered gaily to the others, with coy inclinations this way and that of her mountainous coiffure. Her hands fascinated me—so flashingly quick—so dexterous—like lily petals dancing to fast music.

I was finishing my third cake of sweetened bean paste when Ichikawa reached over to inspect the masks of comedy and tragedy on my National Collegiate Players charm. Suddenly he clapped his hands together sharply and beamed at me.

"How you like be Japanese actor?" he demanded.

"Nothing better! When do I start?"

"You must be *eejin* noble from far land—come long way—very much anxious marry daughter of great Emperor!"

That sounded interesting. So he led me into a dressing room, we squatted on the mats, and he arrayed me in a Tartar costume of baggy purple, with thick-soled Mongolian boots, and topped the ensemble with a natty round fur hat. He slung a sword about me, hung massy gold rings in my ears, thrust twenty or thirty smaller ones on my fingers and smeared my face with a thick layer of white cream. Then he lined heavily with a black pencil under the eyes until my fierce and truculent glare sur-

prised me when I looked in the glass. To denote the intense villainy I was to portray he drew a series of French curves in dead black across my face. A thickly matted wig that burst forth from under the cap completed the costume. By the time he had finished I looked like a cross between a Maori chief at a clambake and a sunburned inmate of Sing Sing.

Ichikawa was so delighted he clapped his hands and grinned broadly. We sallied forth to the set again. From the next stage as we entered came tumultuous sounds of strife. We scurried around, tripping over light cables, in time to see the queerest fencing bout I ever hope to witness. The hero, cool and calm but wary as a cat, was standing in a pose of exaggerated valor, both hands holding a long sword up before him on defense. A horde of desperate ruffians closing in on him were registering as much villainy as decorous little men in kimonos and white grease paint possibly can. Plenty of black cross-hatching and streaking partially achieved the object, while to most of them the makeup succeeded in imparting that cross-eyed look so esteemed among Japanese stage rascals.

With most elaborate posturing and thrusting executed in lightning-like flashes, this oriental Doug Fairbanks turned three handsprings, bounced into the air, clicked his heels together and set about disposing of the caitiffs who threatened him. He did it smartly in a series of neat figures.

Cut! Three down. Slash! Casualties—eight. Thrust! Ten, game and the coast was clear.

"Kurishima Sumiko, greatest actress in Japan."

Schochi-ku Kinema Company: Hanaka San, the Schochi-ku star

Schochi-ku Kinema Company

"But he didn't even touch them!" I protested to Ichikawa.

"Eye not quick—how can see?—go like—zip!" he explained, clapping his hands and grinning with all his teeth.

Another director appeared and marshalled his forces. It appeared that I was to spring through a flimsy paper partition at the rear of the Imperial courtroom set with drawn sword at the head of my wild berserks and demand the hand of the lovely princess in marriage just as the saké was being drunk to solemnize her nuptials with the hero. After two rehearsals the director and Ichikawa hissed with pleasure and concurred that I would do. The Kleigs flared.

"Hai!" shouted the director. "Hai! Hai!"

I burst through the tissue paper door like a clown through a hoop, knocking my hat off in the process. I waved my arms, shook my floating locks and brandished my dirk. I glared and glowered.

"Cry something!" prompted Ichikawa quickly.

For the life of me I could think of nothing but Patrick Henry's speech on liberty or death. I shouted as much of it as I could remember, swaggering back and forth in a threatening manner between two chalk lines indicating the focal width of the camera and gradually edging closer and closer to the emperor, as I had been instructed.

"A'right!" through the megaphone. The lights died. I was told to sit on the floor, while little tables about a foot high were brought in and set the length of the room. Others took their places at the feast, including several

geishas with samisens. I was informed that this was the orgy at which appeared in a cloud of smoke the wizard who put a poetic end to the foreigners, much to the relief of the lovers. We rehearsed again, and again the tubes shone. The geishas strummed and sang; all the gentlemen guests caroused in maudlin fashion. A smoke bomb puffed; out of it sprang the good wizard, who plunged a knife into our backs.

"Please to wriggle! Twist!" shouted Ichikawa.

I wriggled and twisted. I writhed, toppled over a teapot, grimaced horribly, and passed to that bourne whence no villain returns, with no tocsin to toll my passing. And so ended my small part as an extra in that sterling drama, that celebrated classic, that stupendous super-production, "The Storm at Takamatsu."

Several things I learned that afternoon. I found that the more or less symbolical sword fighting, a specimen of which I had witnessed, is a very essential part of all classical screen plots. No offering is considered complete without several hundred feet of artistically modified murder. Too, with the exception of a few pictures on modern lines, called *shimpa*, in which the patent leather sheiks and the jazz babies exaggerate all the worst emanations from Hollywood into grotesque enormities, most of the features deal with classical subjects from the treasure chest of Japanese history.

Ichikawa and I visited the property room, a veritable museum of scowling masks, gay lanterns, fantastic armor, thick floor mats and a white cockatoo who rolled his head

to one side and shrieked "Ohio!" There were hundreds of swords of all lengths. In Japan the sword symbolizes personal honor and loyalty to the traditions of one's forebears. There were no sound devices, for the talkies had not yet arrived.

In the neighboring costumery we walked between row on row of gorgeous kimonos of red, pink, violet and intermediate shades, like walls of flaming hibiscus on either side of a path. A staff of little brown scenic carpenters were as busy as beavers in the next room turning out miracles of neatly-joined cabinet work. It was expected that talking mechanism would be installed very soon. Farther on was the department devoted to that most essential adjunct of all Japanese drama—wigs. In no other country does the style of hairdress enjoy such significance. On the Japanese stage the mode of its arrangement determines the rank of the actor, whether daimyo (lord), samurai (knight), or a lesser condition. Or, in the case of women, a young girl, a single woman or a wife. After inspecting the intricate convolutions of some of these one allows merit to the custom of sleeping on wooden neck supports to preserve them, making re-coifing necessary but once a week.

We crossed the studio lot, threading between a huge red plaster pagoda and a long frame set representing the Tokyo Yoshiwara.

"How much do you suppose Miss Sumiko receives a week?" I asked.

He rolled his eyes impressively.

"Oh, four, five hundred yen," he replied. "Some weeks

maybe more. In Japan she is to us like your Mary Pickford."

"Do you know that in America many are paid two million yen a year?"

Mr. Ichikawa grinned at such wild exaggeration and politely changed the subject.

CHAPTER XXVII

Happy Ending

"When I consider the state of foreyn countreys, and do compare this yor Ma's realme to the rest of the worlde as well for justice and civilitie as for wealthe and commodities, I do so much reioice in my countrey that as I do yelde contynuall and most hertie thanks unto God for His goodness. . . ."

—Adress to Edward VI—Willm. Thomas (1550)

Two days after my visit to Kamata a storm blew in from the sea, and the sky was fully overcast. The afternoon and evening I spent in wandering among the ruins of the once imposing sea-front, now a shattered semblance of its former glory. There was something of Pompeii in the heaving sidewalks; in the banks of broken steps rising to hotels, banks and residences that had vanished as completely as though they had been sliced away with a knife. Steamship offices that had once done business behind marble fronts still held forth, but in shacks of charred brick or corrugated tin. Here and there a pile of debris still testified to the tragedy that had claimed over a hundred thousand victims. A twisted iron grille pointed skyward like a dead tree—a blackened wall stood jaggedly alone.

I returned to the Y to find that a new ship had come in, and with it as hard a lot of sailormen as follow the sea

in these days of unromantic steamers. When they were all finally settled and snoring it was well after midnight. It seemed only a moment afterward that I was awakened by a deep twang like a loud guitar chord. Someone switched on a light. A picture on the wall was moving to and fro like an unsteady pendulum. The noise was coming from a cable stretched across a corner of the room with the evident intention of holding the building together, and now doing yeoman service in that very cause. The cable tautened again and its note was a higher, more ominous one. Without waiting for full orchestra, the whole roomful of hardboiled seamen cast off coverings and began to abandon ship, bumping into cots and knocking each other over in their mad anxiety to escape. Along the pitching hall—down the weaving stairs fled the motley crew, shouting like a crowd of Turkish pirates and sped by the groaning of the cables, now audible from all parts of the building.

We waited outside on the unsteady earth for the quake to subside. The movement produced a feeling of nausea. Everywhere along the still dark streets people appeared, standing rather disgustedly outside their houses, with blankets draped around them, and watching the world sway back and forth. When it had stopped they reentered. It was said there had been a severe quake in Kyoto prefecture; a few villages had been destroyed and several hundred people killed. "That's nothing, though," declared the young steamship agent who informed me. "The day of the big quake in '23 I saw a man get off the tram on that corner out there just as the earth opened up

for two squares. The man dropped into the crack, and right away it closed on him like the jaws of a trap, just as if it had been waiting!"

Finally the *Korea Maru* sailed. It was a good thing, because I was hungry. I saw Martha's mother among the first-class passengers and waved to her. There was a Roumanian down below with me among the Japanese, and a young Y. M. C. A. worker from Foochow who had been driven out after he had kicked two thieving Cantonese soldiers from a second-story window. The Japanese were mostly bound for Hawaii. They arranged entertainments of their own, including wrestling matches and thumping quarter-staff bouts in leather armor. One day I decided to try conclusions with one of the better staff wielders. It was an ill-advised moment. I was smashed, battered, pummelled and ignominiously beaten. The armor was as paper against his blows. Painfully, I shed it and swore off.

The new French Ambassador was aboard. In his honor the first-class passengers planned a masked ball. I bethought myself of a leopard skin I had packed all the way from Sikkim—surely it would make a splendid costume. From nose to tail it was a good nine feet, and marked in barbaric designs of brown and gold. I tied it on, manufactured a growler out of a can and rosined string, hid in the shadows between a hatch coaming and a coil of rope, and scared a steward out of seven years' growth. Satisfied that I was authentic, I crept up to the boat deck by devious ways and mingled with the patricians. Scores of costumes and spangled couples were drifting slowly

beneath the combined radiance of a round moon and Japanese lanterns whose warm colors studded the tropic night. The waves washed away from the sides of the vessel in long phosphorescent swells. To the strains of the orchestra, the swells of the Pacific and the music of the spheres swayed the dancers. What an evening!

I danced with the lovely daughter of the Ambassador and others who suspected not my lowly state. Then, as the ball gave signs of ending, I departed by the way I had come before the stewards found me out and threw me to the sharks.

Then came Honolulu. Surely no spot in all the world can be more languorous and lovely. A warm sun breathed energy between little showers, and the scent of many flowers was in the streets. At Waikiki I tried innocently to ride the crest of a roller on a surf-board, turned three somersaults and gashed my knee on a coral reef. But that could not dim my admiration. As we pulled away at sunset the Royal Hawaiian Band was playing "Aloha" plaintively across the widening waters. Whether one has been in Honolulu a day or a lifetime, that parting must be the saddest on earth.

In a few days we passed the Farallones, and then the foggy cleft of the Golden Gate opened grayly to let us through. The skyline of San Francisco was clearly etched. A band was playing "Home, Sweet Home." The siren boomed. Familiar sights and sounds multiplied apace. Immigration officials thumbed my battered passport.

Much had happened since that day in June when Cyrano's ringing triolets had set my feet upon the long road. I had looked upon the face of the world and found it fair.

I had no regrets. I had many memories.

THE END